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The Miscellany

Edited by P. Lal

THE MONIKA VARMA TRANSCREATION

The
Gita Govinda
of
Jayadeva

and an Exchange Between Monika-Varma & Amalendu Bose

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WORKSHOP NEWS

This issue contains the text of the complete translation of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda*. This magnificent twelfth-century Sanskrit poem has has been for long unavailable to English readers. No satisfactory translation of it exists; the Edwin Arnold version, in blank verse, is too Victorian for modern tastes, and the George Keyt, now out of print, was often merely a paraphrase. MONIKA VARMA lives on her 63-acre farm in Krishaknagar, Madhya Pradesh; she has two books under the WW imprint (*Dragonflies Draw Flame*; *More Poems*; Rs 8 each); she has also translated *A Bunch of Togore Poems* (Rs 8), and is at present working on a monograph discussing the poetry of three WORKSHOP women poets. * WORKSHOP publications (among them P. LAL's transcreation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*) are used as texts in a course on the literature of India in the San Diego State College, California. Some have also been adopted as texts in the Indian Religion and Culture course taught by Dr A. J Matthews in Elmira College, New York. Dr Matthews was one of a group of Fulbright Senior Professors visiting India in the early part of 1968. * P. LAL's poem, *The Parrot's Death*. is included in a volume entitled *People and Places in World-English Literature*, compiled by Professor Joseph Jones of the Department of English of the University of Texas. This volume "offers a sequence of short biographical and critical introductions to writers within its area (Canada, West Indies, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand). * PRITISH NANDY's early poems are now a Dialogue Calcutta volume, *I Hand You in Turn My Nebbuk Wreath*. NANDY's first two books of verse have WW imprints. Dialogue books are available from the WORKSHOP; catalogue free on request. * Visitors to the WORKSHOP in recent months were P. N. SHASTRI, once editor of the Hindi monthly *Gyanodaya* (SHASTRI's review of S. H. Vatsyayan's anthology *Modern Hindi Poetry* will appear in *The Miscellany*), and SWADESH BHARATI, editor of the bilingual (Hindi and English) *Rupambara*, in whose latest "Poetry India" issue is a review of P. LAL's *Love's the First*. * The University of Papua and New Guinea have ordered a complete set of WORKSHOP publications for their library to be used for reference and textual study in their Commonwealth Literature course. * NISSIM EZEKIEL gave a three-month course in Creative Writing in Sophia College, Bombay; one result was the publication of a cyclostyled little magazine called *Nothing Much*; EZEKIEL also officially released the WORKSHOP edition of GOPALAKRISHNA ADIGA's poems at the 60th birth anniversary celebrations of the poet in Udipi in November. * HOWARD SERGEANT is editing a paperback called *Poetry From India*, which will feature the work of four poets, all of them first published by the WORKSHOP. * P. LAL broadcast readings from "Negro Poetry" from the Calcutta station of A. I. R. on 22 November 1968; and reviewed four books in a radio review in December (*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, *Cuban Poetry* [Dialogue Books], Humayun Kabir's *The Bengali Novel*, and *The First American Literary Anthology*.)

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writers workshop calcutta

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The Complete Text of

THE GITA GOVINDA OF JAYADEVA

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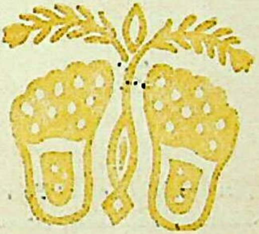

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THE MONIKA VARMA TRANSLATION

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Notes and Translation

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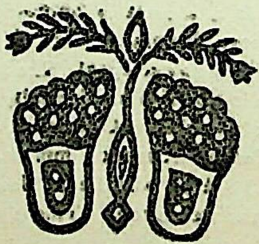
JAYADEVA was born in the 12th century in the village of Kenduli (also called Kendu-bilva) in Bolpur thana in the Suri sub-division of Birbhum district in West Bengal, India.

The phrase "dehi pada pallava-mudaram" *(p.* XI *and p.* 80*) is inscribed in Bengali script below a platform on which are two small images of Radha and Krishna at a nine-ratna terracotta temple erected by a Raja of Birbhum at the entrance of Kenduli.*

⁂

The feet symbol below : "Your feet, O Krishnna, had the nineteen symbols of divinity." [SKANDA PURANA]. *Nineteen — eight on the left foot, eleven on the right.*



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The GITA GOVINDA can be taken as pure poetry, and translated in its literal and poetic sense, or the translator can enter into the philosophical feel of the poem, and transcreate and interpret ; then, the translation that emerges is Jayadeva's GITA GOVINDA, not in Sanskrit but in English, as felt and written by this translator. It is then not merely a translation of the language but a translation of the *bhava* : the inherent meaning and purport.

Many may disagree with this method but I have used it as a form of search, and experiment. My first attempt in transcreating a fragment of the GITA GOVINDA seems to have met with the approval of certain critics. I now place the whole before readers, writers, and thinkers.

The GITA GOVINDA has been considered, and is possibly still considered by many, to be purely a love-poem filled with eroticism — and by the even less knowledgeable, to verge on pornography and obscenity with its stress only on sex and passion.

The GITA GOVINDA is, of course, filled with the flavour of erotics and is not meant for the inexperienced, and childish.

Its full flavour can only be appreciated by the complete adult who, knowing what passion and erotics is, is able to move beyond the tug and hold of the senses and view their beauty objectively. But to confine the GITA GOVINDA to erotics is a mistake, in my opinion. The truth of the GITA GOVINDA is its metaphysical content. The great love of the soul which is in, and part of, this visual world and searches for its completeness in the Ultimate — and which, by transcendental deep meditation, or Adhyatma-Yoga, realises this eternal love, moves from longing for knowledge as the *abhisarika* down the dark path "on assignation to meet her beloved"; comes to realisation —the cosmic consciousness — and finally, not just the consummation and love for but the absolute awareness of God — which can only be described as God-consciousness — when even the mundane world glitters as the Self of Krishna : all that we see and feel is Krishna : *Vasudeva sarvam iti*; —that is the glory of love that the GITA GOVINDA sings.

But leaving metaphysics alone, the GITA GOVINDA as a poem stands supreme in the perfection of its lyric beauty, its imagery and play of words.

It is not possible to get the full flavour of one language, specially the language of an immortal poet, into the words and imagery of another language alien to the roots and sentiments of the original language.

I lay no claim to perfection and success but I do lay claim to dedication and sincerity.

⁂

The GITA GOVINDA is a conversation between the individual and the Unlimited, or whatever other name one wishes to give It.

The love of Radha and Krishna is the play, the meeting, and the living union between the eternal nature and the Unlimited. The Unlimited by its very nature is eternal ; It cannot become eternal because It Is ; therefore the play, the life and love, is an eternal, unending panorama ; and it is an eternal flowering, an eternal beauty, ever fresh because there is no such thing as decay here. And because it is fresh and flowering it is Springtime. And because all this has a thousand facets it merely gives an impression of being broken into a myriad pieces, a seeming multiplicity, but it is a whole. This is the subtle meaning of Vrindavana, where this Rasa takes place : and this is one of the esoteric secrets known as *rahasya.*

The Invocation to the Avataras should begin with the words "At the dissolution of this which is I", for the entire idea is, also, the flowering, the unfolding, and the developing awareness of the individual to the Unlimited aspect which is himself, and to man's unlimited capacity ; and to the unawakened man his unknown capacity which is his basic nature, and which (knowledge once acquired) opens the floodgates.

In the first verse of the GITA GOVINDA it is Monsoon. It is from this very first verse that Jayadeva prepares the ground for a complete understanding of his description of the Eternal Springtime.

Much has already been written by commentators on this first verse because nothing but Springtime is referred to later in the poem. How is it then that the opening words should be about the Monsoon, or rather that the scene should be placed in the midst of rain and storm ? And why should Nanda come into the picture or ask Radha to take Sri Krishna home ?

This has been discussed in various erudite forms. The explanation which seems to be the best is that, when the great Vaisnavite mystic poet, Jayadeva, began his tremendous poem he did not want either the layman, or the cognoscenti, to have any doubts arise, in any remote form whatsoever, that his poem had anything to do with the everyday man in his commonplace prosaic material living. So, to put a seal on this and dispel all doubts this first verse is based on the Fifteenth Adhyaya of the Brahma Vyvarta Purana.

The Brahma Vyvarta Purana goes into great details about the actual relationship between Radha and Krishna and the meaning of the very word Radha.

RADHA : the latter half of the name, *dha,* leads and develops into *dharan* and *Dharma*. Dharma which is what Upholds and is the Order and the True and Creation itself. For it is the created that upholds the Truth which is both Creator and Creation. There is no duality, no two separate entities, there is only the One. And since that is the True, the truth has to be the eternal Truth of both facts — the Created and the Created — and a statement of this is "Purnam adah, purnam idam". Both are Full, both are complete. Both This and That have to be, since there is no actual "separation".

The transcendental Being is, and the Transcendent remains.

⁂

The story on which the first verse is based is : One day Nanda had gone to the forest to graze his cattle and and as he could not bear to let Sri Krishna out of his sight, he had taken the infant Sri Krishna with him. After a while, he gave the infant his food and put him down under a tree to lie down and sleep. While Nanda was busy, Narayana, in the ever-youthful form of Sri Krishna, thought he would remind Nanda of his power and glory. Even though he was in the form of an infant Sri Krishna is undecaying, therefore age as such does not matter ; and he had taken the form of Sri Krishna for a purpose, and because of that purpose there would be his lila in Vrindavana ; and it was this that he wished to re-awaken in Nanda's mind, and make him recollect and understand. So, Sri Krishna by the power of his Maya made the sky suddenly overcast with dark and lowering clouds ; within a few moments a tremendous storm came up, lightning flashed, thunder rumbled, the whole forest became ink-black and menacing — and the scene is reminiscent of the Monsoon. The animals grew frightened as the rain

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came down in sheets.

Nanda grew most alarmed. Here was the whole herd of cattle frightened and restless, and needed controlling, and on the other hand there was the infant Sri Krishna who, to make this extraordinary game more real, was clinging round Nanda's neck and crying. The bewildered Nanda, desparately worried, began to pray to Jagadamba — the Great Goddess, the Mother, the Helper, Durga — to help him in his hour of need.

Suddenly he saw Srimati Radha coming towards him. Seeing her appear from nowhere, at this time and hour of the day in the forest, mystified Nanda. Then, in a clear flash, he remembered that once Muni Garga had told him Srimati Radha was Narayanii, in the form, *rupa*, of Laksmi, and Sri Krishna was Narayana.

On remembering and recollecting this, Nanda handed Sri Krishna over to Radha telling her to take him home; thereby implying : *Devi, I know He is yours ; take him home ; take back what belongs to you, and be happy together.*

⁂

The GITA GOVINDA is full of allusions to the physical form, and physical perfections and allurements of the female form ; and to "loosened garments" — *vigalita vasanam*.

The key to the *rahasya*, what might be phrased as divine comedy, is in this phrase "loosened garment". What are these garments ? It is these outward attributes, these holds of life and the garments which swathe a person, and involve, in daily pedestrian living ; which cover the person, in the involvement of hatred (*ghrna*), fear, pride, anger, good deeds and bad, sins of the spirit, envy. It is these which break up the wholeness of man's personality, and distract. It is the veil between him and his Self. It is his garments which, if he sheds, he can, like a woman before her lover, stand naked and unashamed ; and in the passion of that tremendous love allow every nuance of that perfection to be visualised and loved. Love is a very inadequate word in this context when it can be said : The lover is waiting eagerly in the bower of eternal Springtime in Vrindavana ; waiting in all the secret and quiet places, in the wild-wood of silence where the mind can be at peace, and can seek. And on the other hand, the Lover is fearful lest the loved one does not come.

To explain this viewpoint I quote the great promise in the *Bhagavad Gita* : *ye bhajanti mam bhaktya mayi te tesu capyaham* = those who worship me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them. And the great mystic call : *nistraigunyo bhava* = be above (or uninvolved) in the three gunas (the three attributes which are the basis of living itself).

One cannot throw away the wrappings of the three gunas and be clothed in envy, hate, and other mind-clogging matters. And if you believe that the lover is waiting for you, just as anxiously, what loving heart — in the allegorical guise of a woman, and Srimati Radha — will not walk to that secret trysting place ?

The question arises as to why this Indivisible, Unlimited, should be described as a lover, and waiting. What is the idea behind the Rasa, why should Sri Krishna be described as having multiple loves, therefore multiplying himself ? These questions have always led to a lot of speculation and discussion. As one speculative possibility I put forward the sruti : *so'ham bahusyam.* The One Indivisible wishes to be many, and those who are in this world wish to be one and undivided from the One Indivisible. This is the unending lila, and the unending Rasa in the Springtime that never ceases.

⁂

The GITA GOVINDA, though Vaisnavite, and therefore belonging to the Bhakti cult, seems to me to be an intellectual adventure, and should be categorised, if it must be categorised, as belonging to the Jnana Marga. It is delightful to see in how many ways the Unlimited can be described, and then, how delightfully, Jayadeva describes the human from the divine alter ego, thereby giving the highest satisfaction, also, to one's poetic sense. And here bhakti, or dedicated devotion, has reached such a pinnacle that it is constantly awake in a plane of objectivity, and certainty. How else can one account for the line: *dehi pada pallava mudaram*, when Sri Krishna prays to Srimati to give him her feet to lay as cool benediction upon his yearning, suffering heart.

There is a legendary story about how Jayadeva came to write this line. The story is: that Jayadeva having written the first part of the verse was completely carried away, and could not complete the verse. He called out to Padmavati, his wife and dear companion, and herself an accomplished poet, besides being a singer and dancer. He was weeping, overwrought with emotion, "Padmavati, the One at whose feet the world flings itself today, Himself wants to hold someone's feet — how can I write such a thing? What shall I do, Padmavati?"

Padmavati calmed him and pointed out that it was late; he should bathe and eat now, and after resting he could write again. Jayadeva, realising that Padmavati too had not eaten either, went to the river to bathe. In the meantime Padmavati busied herself preparing to serve the food. Within a short while she found that he had returned. Hastily she served and, after he had eaten, he asked for the manuscript. Padmavati fetched it, and he wrote down on it the words: *dehi pada pallava mudaram.* Then he went into the room where he normally rested, and shut the door.

Padmavati sat down to eat her own food and then she heard the sound of someone coming in through their front door. On looking out she was mystified to see Jayadeva, with a wet towel over his shoulder, as if he was just returning from the river after his bath. Padmavati ran to the next room and opened the door. There was no one there. There was only the perfume of sandalwood and lotus blossoms. She told Jayadeva what had happened, and Jayadeva cried, "Today, the Most Merciful has taken pity on his devotee, and *bhakta*, and written down the words that I could not bring myself to write down. We are blessed, blessed, Padmavati."

There is *always* an explanation ; but as a story it is charming and, if one allows the imagination to visualise the whole scene, it is very beautiful.

The whole of the GITA GOVINDA is permeated with the scent of blossoms and love ; and a divine ecstasy runs through the lines. It is as if the poet is intoxicated with a divine madness. No human love can attain such violent poetic passion — it would cloy and pall.

In one of the early verses Jayadeva has elaborated in poetic form a commentary on his famous contemporaries, the five *ratnas*, the human jewels, who adorned the court of Raja Laksmana Sen of Bengal.

In Navadvip, at the entrance to the durbar hall, over the doorway were written two lines commemorating the actuality :

Govardhanasca sarana Jayadeva Umapatih,
kavirajasca ratanani pancaite Laksmanasya ca.

Finally, if Jayadeva claims that his poem is "Poetry in its entirety", that it has all the different moods, the rasas possible in poetic writing, he surely is justified, because for lilt, lyricism, musical nuance of language, and alliterative splendour of sound, it is difficult to find a poem quite like this.

SAMODA-DAMODARA

The Gita Govinda is divided
into twelve parts
and each part named Sarga
— which I have called Abode of Love.
Each part is named differently
to depict the flavour
of the subtle changing moods of love,
whether it be of Radha or Sri Krishna.
The First Abode of Love is called :
Samoda Damodara.

In this Radha,
who is seeking her Krishna everywhere,
is told by one of her Sakhis
that her Beloved
is amusing himself with others.
'Amusement' is another word for 'Amoda' ;
and Damodara is one of the names of Sri Krishna
who 'amuses himself' ;
hence the title Samoda-Damodara.
As has been pointed out in the Note,
the first verse lays down
the statement of the metaphysical flavour
of the poem as a whole.
Then after the complimentary introduction
are the great Invocations,
and then comes the appearance
of Srimati, or Radha.

The First
Sarga

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মেঘৈর্মেদুরম্বরং বনভুবঃ শ্যামাস্তমালদ্রুমৈ-
র্নক্তং ভীরুরয়ং তদিমং রাধে গৃহং প্রাপা ।
ইত্থং নন্দনিদেশতশ্চলিতয়োঃ প্রত্যধ্বকুঞ্জদ্রুমং
রাধামাধবয়োর্জয়ন্তি যমুনাকূলে রহঃ কেলয়ঃ ॥

[SARGA I : *sloka* I]

GITA GOVINDA

The sky is overcast, and shadows darken the forest,
Night descends,
O Radha, take the frightened Sri Krishna and lead him
home.
Hearing these words from Nanda,
On the banks of the Yamuna, under the shadowed trees,
Radha and Madhava hurry and meet today, secretly, to love.

Let us praise this hour of love, this moment of ecstasy
And union, between Radha and Madhava.

He on whose heart is etched the Lord of the Word,
And he, who is the worshipping poet at the feet of
Padmavati,
That Jayadeva is about to sing today of Vasudeva
and his teasing game of love.

If by recollection of Hari you are filled with curiosity
to learn of this moment in love's memory
then listen to this poem written by me,
Jayadeva, in words tender, and sunk in serenity.

Umapati enriches the language,
and Sarana the poet writes swiftly on any esoteric point,
Govardhana strings garlands of words together, delicate as
flowers,
And Dhoyi is truly a lyric.
Each enriches, each has shone a lamp on the numerous
facets of poetry,
But it is Jayadeva who has written this work complete in
every mood
and mode, the whole : Poetry in its entirety.

INVOCATIONS

1

At the Dissolution,
O Kesava, Lord of Cosmic Splendour,
Hari,
You are the form as of a Fish,
that which leaps,
the Idea, the catcher and the caught,
the eternal Word,
which lives as Sound in the Universal Breath
is saved by your benediction.
You are the refuge, the victor, the giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

2

At the Dissolution,
O Kesava, Lord of Eternal Splendour,
Hari,
You are the form of a Tortoise.
Within the sheltering shell Thought, tender still,
treads on the path where Spirit breathes,
and Breath alone is the ocean milk-heavy with joy.

Love supports the idea, Intelligence the conscious formation.
Victory to you Lord, our eternal refuge, the giver of
grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

3

At the Dissolution,
O Kesava, Lord of the Cosmic Concourse,
Hari,

You are the form of a Boar.
The Idea, filled with fear, drowning in the flood roaring in, sinks ;
and you, Lord, are the awesome strength that saves ;
the Idea, lifted into the tender light of understanding, breathes again.

Victory to you Lord, our eternal refuge, the giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

4

At the Dissolution,
O Kesava, Cosmic Lord,
Hari,
You are the form of the leonine Man.
No man, no beast, yet all call you his own,
Kesava, Hari.
The Idea stands as Truth tearing the entrails of untruth away.
Victory to you Lord, our eternal refuge, the giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

5

At the hour of arrogance
You take the form of the Dwarf,
only a thumbling, a thumb's span high,
yet, Lord, your splendour fills the heavens.
The formed, the unformed, and arrogance awake at last to truth
begged the benediction of the third stride upon his lowered head.
O Kesava, Lord of the worlds,
Hari,

Victory be yours, our eternal refuge and giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

6

Righteousness must be a divine shelter,
Lord,
or you, in the form as Parasurama, will, as if with a violent axe,
decimate, destroy, and obliterate.
Let us, therefore, remember and recollect ;
O Kesava, be you ever victorious,
our eternal refuge and giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

7

O Kesava, Lord of Merciful Compassion,
Lord of worlds without end,
Yours is the form of Rama when the cosmic idea is attacked,
hurt and grieved, and breaks down under the onslaught of the ten
different directions of the formed senses.
The divine Idea guarded by the unbreakable strength of Rama's bow
is the formless caught by a vision.
O Kesaav, Hari, yours is everlasting victory,
our eternal refuge and giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

8

The Yamuna shudders blue
in fear of your ploughshare that turns even the deep flow of love
to face Reality.

White as swan's feather, light, loving and full of laughter,
you are the form of Balarama.
O Kesava, Lord of life,
Hari, you are the eternal refuge,
the victor, the giver of grace.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

9

When metaphysics and allegories
are demeaned and taken in their visual forms,
when animal natures, and the nature of animality is not
sacrificed
but bleeding goats, and headless buffaloes, leer
from the compassionate feet of rock-hewn gods,
You are the form of Buddha,
the serene and ageless face of Reason calming the screams
and turmoils of chaotic thought.
O Kesava, O Hari, Lord of Mercy,
yours is eternal victory,
You, who are our refuge, and giver of grace, beyond the
bonds of understanding.
Jaya Jagadisa Hare !

10

When Faith is lost
and alien thought, ways and manners attack the eternal
Truth,
when Reason, Compassion, and Mercy are not heeded ;
when the cosmic Idea is filled by the arrogance of conglomerate matter ;
and mind and Man blind in ignorance,
deaf to the flaming words and thoughts,
and mute to the plea of love,
grow too loud, disturbing the Wind's way,

You, O Kesava, are the form of Kalki.
A billowing cloud of annihilating smoke is your visual form.
A naked and mighty sword stands to guard,
to destroy, to establish the eternity of Truth
that has no end. Neither is there a beginning.
Kesava, Lord of Cosmic Splendour,
victory be yours forever.
You are our refuge the grace that is yours give us to the end
of our limited days.
Jai Jagadisa Hare.

⁂

O Kesava, O Hari,
Lord of all the universes,
by this description of your ten forms
I raise a song to your power and glory.
In this, and this alone, is our wellbeing and happiness.
All beatitudes rise from thought and remembrance of your
glory.
In this formed world, where nothing lasts beyond its span,
may your grace span matter and form, and bring us
happiness ;
and so I sing this song of praise.

The eternal words are yours,
yours the spinning galaxies, universes, and worlds
without end.
By trust in thought for you the sinking drowning world of
the spirit
is saved ; by you spiritual arrogance is obliterated,
and your power is victorious over the ten wild senses.
You deepen the flow of love by opening the mind to face
Reality,

30323

and the released heart is flooded with compassion :
the loving-kindness of your grace.
And again your fierce, flame-like strength
rises against all thoughts, manners, and modes alien to the
law of love.
These, O Kesava, are your ten forms,
and of these I sing, and to these we raise our prayers.

He, who lives in the heart of love,
bedecked with gems, and ornaments glittering with
splendour,
whose neck is gracious to garlands of adoring flowers,
O Hari, eternal victory be yours.
You are the glory of this world of perception,
You are the sole instrument by which we can be freed from
entangling bondage.
In the hearts of Rishis, and saintly thinkers,
You are He, who is the Swan resting on the pool of
Consciousness,
You, as the Swan, rest — for disturbed by turmoil of
thinking
you are lost ; yet, for those who know you,
You are the Swan floating forever free,
uncaught, untrammelled, resting,
the Knower of the Known.
O Hari, yours is the victory, is my song and prayer.

The terrible serpent that raises his head,
breathes poison, and advances to destroy,
You are his victor.
Your feet, tender as those of a child,
crush his expanded hood, and you as Krishna, the glory of
the Yadava clan,
O Hari, are God and salvation,
Yours is the victory, again and again.

Of the egoistical moods that carry the names

of Madhu, Mura, and Naraka,
you are the destroyer.
And Garuda, the giant bird that forever flies,
the breath and refuge of gods and knowers,
is your throne.
To you, O Hari, I raise my song, be you victorious forever.

Tender as a lotus are your two eyes,
and their benediction removes our useless sorrows.
And in all the imagined heavens, and hells,
and these worlds that we see,
You are the answer, our refuge, our joy, our only one,
O Hari, victory be yours forever.

Armed by the love of Janaki,
who is unshakable devotion and faith.
you are Rama, destroyer of Ravana:
you destroy the antics of our uncontrolled ten-faced senses.
Joy, and victory, to you, O Hari.

You are like a newly formed cloud ;
tender is your body, blue as a faint shadow of space,
yet, O Hari, your strength is such that even a deluge,
and flood of carping desires is kept away, and we are
sheltered
only by one raised finger of yours — as you used the
mountain
Mandodara to shelter the Brij-basis of story and song ;
Lord, even Lakshmi, she who is the grace of unchanging
faith,
gazes entranced forever at your lovely face.
O Hari, be victorious, is my song.

Lord. compassionate One,
I have sought refuge at your feet,
and I know you will be merciful, and gracious,

to one who clings only to you.
By your grace, and loving-kindness,
may poet Jayadeva fill these songs with that fervour which will glorify
your name through the ages and shower happiness into stricken hearts.

He, who holds the lotus of love to his heart,
and the nectared pollen, and the breath of passion,
running a rivulet of uncontrolled love maddens and marks,
and the god, whose breast is marked by this,
may the thought of him increase your well-being,
and bring you the happiness that is love.

In the hour of Spring,
when Time had enveloped Srimati's mind with the agony of love,
she wandered bemused, lost, desperate with desire for the beloved,
in the hidden woods of Vrindavana.
There, found by her companion, the fevered and frantic Srimati
② was told :
As the soft breeze of Spring shrives the heart of flowers
for the passion-filled hum of honey-gathering bees,
the scream of separation touches the tense reaches
of tautened strings upon which plays the heartless mild breeze of Spring.

O my friend, how shall I tell you how, today,
on this lovely day of heartrending Spring, your Beloved
plays, sings, and dances with others.
Listen, there it calls, it cries, on every side, round, about,
from every reach of direction it comes :
the sound of tears that whisper of separation,
the separation that is a waking agony in the hearts of the

wedded
whose loves have gone to disparate lands.
As their sighs rise in sound it joins the clatter of blossoms
as the bees fall on them in mourning waves
and in hum of sorrowing voice.

O my dear, my friend, look upon this delicate day of Spring,
the branches swell with bud that will blossom soon,
and those that bloom fill the air with scent
and madden the breeze,
even as the musk-deer, who not realising his own qualities,
is enraptured by a forest drenched by a perfumed breeze.
The scarlet flowers seem wounds inflicted upon the breast
of lovers torn apart who scored the flesh with their nails
in the ecstasy of love.
And all the woods, and all the forest is nothing but flowers,
a golden sceptered land filled with blossoms upon which,
softly,
descend the bees like the flower-bedecked bow of that
heartless god.

And my friend, on this beautiful day of Spring
modesty and shame and natural rectitude is forgotten,
all about there is laughter ;
the trees, the flowers, the blossoms, the world of men, they
smile,
and like a streak of lightning, that like a sword-thrust
pierces our monsoon skies, today, this Springtime has
plunged
its pain into those whose loves have been put away, and pain
of separation sits in their hearts enthroned.
And shameless this Springtime laughs.

O my friend, the perfume of flowers is the beauty,
the grace, and a benediction of this day of Spring.
Its call breaks the violent vows even of ascetics

and the young ones with hearts of innocence laugh.
Spring, my dear, is the love of the innocent heart.
Ah, today even the mighty trees quiver from the clinging touch
and tendrils of blossom-laden creepers ;
and the flooded reaches of Vrindavana rejoice in the rising sound
of passionate love.
And of this beautiful day of Spring, this that I, Jayadeva,
have written, may it remain alive and awake in your memory
with the eternal thought of the feet of God,
that Shyama who is our Beloved and our Love
to the end of our days.

Today, into the forest, has come the Springtime wind,
the breeze which is the favourite of the god of love,
a breeze drugged by the scent of the *ketaki* in flower ;
the breeze that rises in love-soaked languor from the heart of blossoms.
This honeyed scent, it drapes, it spreads as a rainbow, as a flung veil.
In swathes and skeins of piercing perfume
it flames a destroying fire in the minds of those hurt by the pain
of separation.
This Springtime wind of the South
finds itself in the scented sandalwood forest,
but the fierce and venomous breath of snakes coiled
(3) scorches this tender-bodied air,
and scorched and burning, the South Wind rushes north,
north to the cold Himalayas
to cool itself in its ice-bound cold, cold depth.

Yet the Springtime's hurrying breath
wakes the pointed spikes of slumbering blossoms,
and awakening they sing, this the birds realise, and peal

the heart of their songs in a shouting joy of mad abandon.
The bees, hungering for the nectar they can scent,
maddened by perfume,
fall in waves upon the distressed mango-blossoms ;
The soaring song of nightingales,
and the piercing love-song of birds, fill the forest paths
with an agitation which infects the traveller.
He knows no quiet, no contentment, walking on his self-allotted path.
He has but one consolation : at the end of the path the lover will
be waiting, this path will end, and he will meet the loved one.
This, and this alone, makes this wild ache, this frenzy,
this burning fire of separation,
this Springtime flame, bearable.

On a day like this the loving friend,
accompanying the distracted Srimati,
saw, not so far away, hidden in the blossom-flaring forest,
Murari embraced in the arms of others.
Seeing this, she said ;
He, whom you love, has swathed his limbs,
which is the blue of the sky, in yellow today —
in the fire's fiercer, flame-like, heat —
and on that sky-blue body the white paste gleams clear
white as ice.
And due to his playful mood the adornments of his ears —
the directions by which we hear —
and the glitter of gems, reflects light
③ upon that glowing face smiling his lovely never-to-be-forgotten smile.
The love-drugged ones, who are never sated,
gaze entranced, untiring, at their Lord.
One Gopa-badhu — one who is bound
to the Lord with the tie of unending love,

one who is one with the Lord,
one who is conscious of this, conscious of this all in all —
I and Shyama, who has stolen my mind, with whom I am
    at one —
such a Gopa-badhu, heavy with the lassitude of passionate
    love,
leans upon him, and raises a song
on the fifth and final elemental note.

Another, entranced, cannot take her eyes ayay,
and wide-eyed, bemused, gazes at Sri Krishna's face.
And this newly awakened, and ever new, craving
has, by its touch, opened a thousand-petalled lotus in her
    heart.
Yet another, heavy in languor,
sways against him, comes closer, pretends to whisper secrets
    in his ear,
and leans face against face, and looking up in curiosity
sees Shyama, awake, trembling with love.
Finding the moment magic,
she marks with kisses that spatial blue,
that dream of love.

Enchanted with the mood, the hour,
and love's great play, yet another saunters to the secret
leafed-in haunts by the waters of the Yamuna ;
and seeing, half-hidden, the sounder of the call,
throws herself in to the longed-for embrace.
And in some other place, in another mood,
another sings and dances clapping her hands, and the
    ornaments on her arms
keep time ; and in time dances,
Hari.

Today Hari holds someone to his heart,
others, in other ways, he wholly satiates.

By love, in passion, or by his looks alone —
the fleeting glance fleering from laughing eyes —
lures, leads on, breaks down all turning away.

And all this is the unending game of love.
This is the unending game played by Krishna,
Hari, Shyama,
He, who is forever calling, told by me, Jayadeva,
and I pray, may you, the hearers of my song, be happy,
and may your happiness increase, listening
to this song of the divinity of love.

My loved companion, in love's great play, today, Kesava
has brought into existence colour and form.
The whole world, this universe, the galaxies without end,
are drunk, intoxicated with some divine madness today,
and in Shyama's tender blue the whole of sight, sound,
and all that we see, and colour, and form, and shape, is
  awake,
full of light, and shimmering, aglitter, today.

The infatuated ones hold him,
hold all that is, close in embrace, and fling themselves into
  love's play.
Happily Madhava reigns incarnate as love.
Even in the sight of the distracted lovers,
the infatuated Srimati, blinded by love,
forgetting and throwing aside all modesty,
holds close to her, her Madhava.
Pretending to be chanting words of worship,
Kesava whispers : Immortal nectar lies in your mouth ;
and then drinks deep, clinging lip to lip.
Satisfied, Kesava smiles,
and may that smile lighten the burden
of all your griefs, and sorrowed days.

AKLESA-KESAVA

In this Second Abode,
"the Kesava Through Whom there is no Sorrow",
the poet portrays
the innermost secret heart and thoughts
of Radha and Krishna ;
and depicts Prem-lila or Love's great play.

Sri Krishna
is with the gopis in Vrindavana
and Radha sees him,
and sees him involved with others.
This awakens in her memories
of the moments she has spent
with Sri Krishna ;
and though she sees him with others
she still states with certainty :
He is mine — he thinks only of me.
That is why she is
neither jealous nor unhappy.

The Rasa-lila of Sri Krishna
is unending
in her mind and thoughts and heart,
yet outwardly, she goes through
all the emotions and rages —
this is necessary
so as to get the full flavour of the Lila —
as it is through these emotions
that the unceasing lila
of Radha and Krishna
is maintained.

The Second
Sarga

বিহরতি বনে রাধা সাধারণপ্রণয়ে হরৌ
বিগলিতনিজোৎকর্ষাদীর্ষ্যাবশেন গতান্যতঃ ।
ক্বচিদপি লতাকুঞ্জে গুঞ্জন্মধুব্রতমণ্ডলী
মুখরশিখরে লীনা দীনাপ্যুবাচ রহঃ সখীম্ ॥

[SARGA 2 : *sloka* 1]

THE SECOND ABODE OF LOVE

Listening to the words of her friend and companion
Srimati grows jealous.
She sees that the bonds that bind her,
and are her glory,
have been gifted by Hari to others
to bind them to him.
Where then is the pre-eminence of Srimati ?
In what way then is she his special love,
and in what way was this love pre-eminent ?
So, with loitering feet, reluctantly,
she moved away.

Moved away from this magic wood
to another leafed-in world,
where the bees hovered over the tree-tops
singing their ceaseless song,
and there, Srimati, like any wounded
love-sick girl, wept.
And crying out to her companion said :

O my dear, my companion, Sakhi,
those lips which on touching the flute
sound the mind-beguiling call,
and whose crown flashes the faceted light
as he turns to look at those gopis,
and whose earrings dance in the loveliness of joy,
that Sri Hari has forsaken me today.

The kisses that the beautiful gopis
are showering on Sri Hari have satiated
his greed today,
and his smile is as tender as the *banduli* blossom.

Entranced, entangled in the bonds of love,
thousands of lovely women
are enfolded within his arms —
O those arms so strong in love.
Their bracelets and anklets,
and the jewelled belts around their waist,
flash flames of fire as the jewels swing and glitter
when they move to embrace.
And the facets of light striking the gems
drive all darkness away.

He, on whose brow the sandalpaste mark
shames the cloud-shadowed moon,
is ruthless today
as his passion rises from the pain
of the full breasts of those lovely women
as they press against him.
He, against whose cheeks the jewelled
fish-shaped earrings sway,
has bound the hearts of gods —
by the unearthly beauty of his yellow garments
covering his cloud-blue limbs.

The branches of the beautiful *kadamba* tree,
banish the fears and sins of the Age.

O my dear, my friend, Sakhi,
I know that in the depth of his vision
and his heart,
Sri Hari
plays the unembodied game of love
only with me.

And this glorious vision of the mind-beguiling image
seen by the poet Sri Jayadeva,
and the vision of the tender feet

seen by the pure-minded wise,
blend into One.

Ah my friend,
it is my craving for him
that is reflected in the crest of the wave
of desire that rises in him —
the slayer of the rude Kesi is my love —
O lead me to him quickly, make haste.

When I come to him in the secret darkness
of the night, he, to tease me, hides ;
and when anxiously, somewhat distraught,
I look for him, here and there,
lightly my love laughs, appears,
and allows himself to be caught.

O my companion, my Sakhi,
I remember, and recollect, such sweet memories —
when first I am near him,
still somewhat shy,
my face turned away,
what words, caressing beguiling words he uses,
and, still talking, shears my shyness away ;
and I do not know when, or how,
but the lassitude and langour is upon me
and my garments fall away.

As I lie upon the soft green grass,
my love makes my heart his bed,
and as I hold him close in my arms
and kiss, he answers by covering my kisses by his —
as if kisses echo and re-echo kisses
by imitative return and answer.

When my eyes grow heavy

and barely open due to the lassitude of love,
my lover's passion rises,
his face flushes,
and as the moisture after love's great play
rolls off my body in beads
the violence of his passion flames in renewed anger ;
and as in ecstasy I cry aloud
that great master of love's art
forgets all that he has gained ;
and when from my loosened tresses
the blossoms adorning me fall,
my love, distraught with passion,
nails on my swelling breasts the marks of love.

When my jewelled anklets shiver, and sing,
then my love's heart sings, his song complete ;
and as my jewelled waist-belt falls apart,
unlinked and loose,
my love plunging his hand into my hair
pulls my face closer, to cover with his kisses.

And when my whole body is satiated and cool,
and my limbs trail like a blossoming creeper,
the god of love is once again awake
and aware in the mind of Madhava,
my glorious love.

These words, this anxiety,
this passionate love-filled song
that the poet Jayadeva has described of the Gopa-vadhu,
may this spread mystic joy into the hearts
of the faithful, who realise the sweetness
of Madhava's Lila.

I know, my dear, my friend, my companion, Sakhi,
that no matter how much these Gopa-vadhus

look at my Madhava, however much they may cast
their eyes upon him,
my Madhava's eyes are bound to me.
He is mine.

When he sees me, he pales,
his flute, that forever calls, falls from his hand,
in completion of happiness he smiles.
Encircled by a hundred beautiful ones of Vraja : the
Gopa-vadhu is my Madhava,
but he is mine, mine.

The asoka has unfolded itself today
in new leaves — but I do not like it, Sakhi.
I do not like this mild breeze
that wakes the flowers,
and the ever-busy restless bees
murmur their distracting song over all these opening
blossoms — I do not like it, Sakhi.

It makes no difference how much these gopis smile,
cast their sliding glances, and flirting, laugh,
pretending their hair has come undone,
raise their arms and show the naked lower reaches
of their swelling breasts,
I know, Sakhi, I know my Madhava
is undisputedly bound by unbreakable bonds
of love to his Radha.

May Madhava, that beautiful ever new Kesava,
remove from all these worlds their sorrows,
and the burden of their pain.

⁂

Kadamba [p. 20, l. 22] :— which shelters the thought of Sri Hari where each flower is a pollen-drenched golden round and each arc unending Universes held by the tree.

MUGDHA-MADHUSUDANA

Having left the company of the gopis,
Sri Krishna goes out
in search of Srimati.
He realises that,
deeply hurt, she must be suffering.
But where will he find her ?

He, whom the whole world,
and the whole of creation,
worships and searches for,
is today distracted, distraught,
and searching madly for his Srimati.

In this Sarga
the poet has described the plight
of the tormented Sri Krishna.
Even though he may be surrounded
by a million gopis
still it is only Radha he thinks of.
And "the entranced and enamoured Madhusudana"
himself says questioningly :
When my heart and Radha's
is entirely one,
why do I seek her
outside in this relative world ?

The Third Sarga

কংসারিরপি সংসারবাসনাবদ্ধশৃঙ্খলাম্ ।
রাধামাধায় হৃদয়ে তত্যাজ ব্রজসুন্দরীঃ ॥

[SARGA 3 : *sloka* 1]

THE THIRD ABODE OF LOVE

For whose sake Madhava, the slayer of Kamsa,
has so gladly bound himself in the chains of creation,
thinking of that Radha,
and worshipping her in his most secret heart,
he leaves the arms of the gopis,
the beautiful ones of Vraja,
in search of his Radha.

Pierced by the arrows of love,
Madhava looks for his Srimati everywhere,
unable to find her, despondent, he wanders
to the banks of the Yamuna,
and in a quiet, leaf-bound place, sits and wonders.

Seeing me surrounded by the Gopa-vadhus
the sensitive Srimati has gone away
thinking me wayward and capricious.
I, alarmed, embarrassed, fearful,
could say nothing — and she walked away.

Hari, Hari,
thinking herself neglected, cast aside,
grieved and angered, she has walked away.

Parted from me for such a long time,
longing for me, what could she be doing,
what could she be thinking, saying, speaking ?
And without my own love what use is all this wealth,
this world and life itself.

I remember her lovely face looking flushed and dark,

her brows arched, subtly aquiver with anger
as if two restless bees were hovering
over a rose-hued lotus blossom.

Ah but in my most secret heart
I feel her ever present.
Why then do I seek her in this outer world ?
Why do I call, why lament the lack, the loss ?
O my tender slender one,
I know what you are suffering.
But how shall I allay your jealousy,
where shall I find you that I may ask your forgiveness
for causing you such pain ?

O companion of my love,
I seem to see you move, moving here and there in
front of me,
in front of my very eyes,
yet you do not come.
When will you, when will you
give me the alms of love in the encircling hold of your
arms ?

Come before me, appear,
do not forsake me,
never again shall I commit so grave a fault.

Look, I am helpless without you,
have pity on my anguish, O lovely one.

As the moon and the ocean are tied together,
so Jayadeva to his home in Kendu-Bilva,
and he sings for you this song
describing the lila of separation
and the anguish of Madhava.

O Kamadeva, god of love,
this is a garland of lotus that sways against my chest —
not serpents.
And around my throat the refulgent blue that you see
is not the poison-blue of Siva's throat
but a garland of blue flowers.
The white marks you see on me are not ash
but sandalwood paste.
I am already helpless with the pain
of being parted from my love, and you,
as if mistaking me for Mahadeva-Siva,
rush towards me letting loose arrow upon arrow
from your flower-bedecked bow.

Calm your anger, god of love,
needless is this aggression,
I am already wounded, and suffering the pains of love.

O Madana, god of love,
I know these blossoms, the piercingly
sweet-scented blossoms of the mango
are your armoury of the springtime,
but I beg you, do not use them on me,
do not even lift your bow,
do not pluck your arrows from the quiver.

We know the world is in thrall to you.
For you it is a joyous game
but what great fame do you covet,
what will you gain by wounding me ?

You are already aware that the doe-eyed one
has wounded me to death by the fierce play
of her side-long glance :
It is more cruel than your flower-decked arrow.
My whole body is aflame and burning with desire.

Even now, even at this moment, I am restless,
in agony, and filled with pain.

O my lovely slender-bodied love,
the great bow of your knitted brows
is so fierce a weapon that my agony is unending.
Each lock of your loosened hair is like a flashing
sword about to slash me down.
And desire for you envelops me as I look
at your lovely carmine lips.
Surely all this is sufficient to conquer,
why then do you advance your attack by the thrust
of those glorious rounded breasts ?

I think of my Srimati in my deepest inmost thoughts
as I meditate upon her name.
I know she is there, unmoving, forever mine,
I am conscious of the bliss of her presence,
I can feel the serenity looking into her lambent eyes,
I can smell the perfume of her lovely face,
like a lotus is her mouth.
I can hear her gentle loving voice,
I can taste the honey of her carmine petal lips.
Then why, O why, do I feel this desolation,
this feeling of deprivation and loss ?
Why does my agony, this agony of being separated
from my love, increase moment to moment,
from hour to hour ?

Seeing the half-glance of Krishna,
Radha's whole body, tender as the lotus blossom,
thrills with joy,
and as Krishna looks
his face half turns, his neck twists,
his earrings sway
and his crown of peacock plumes.

The gopis look only at Krishna,
hear only his magic mind-beguiling flute,
they do not see him look at Radha.
But I, Jayadeva, most fortunate of men,
have seen that terrible love-filled glance,
and may that lovely look re-awaken endless joy
and happiness in all the created worlds.

⁂

SNIGDHA-MADHUSUDANA

In this the poet states :
Sri Krishna
having spent all his time with other gopis
had been frantic with anxiety
not knowing where to now find
his Radha.
Secretly he had feared
that Radha was so hurt and wounded
that she would not turn towards him.
Now, a Sakhi of Radha's comes to him
to tell him that Radha
was not only not angry
but that her suffering,
due to being parted from Sri Krishna,
was so great that she looked
wan and listless
like a tender blossom seared
by the rays of the pitiless sun.
And now Radha was anxiously waiting
for the moment when she could,
once again, meet her Madhava.
On hearing this
Sri Krishna's alarm and fear
that Radha had turned away from him
were laid to rest,
and as he grows "calm and assuaged"
he is the Snigdha Madhusudana.

The Fourth Sarga

যমুনাতীরবানীরনিকুঞ্জে মন্দমাস্থিতম্ ।
প্রাহ প্রেমভরোদ্‌ভ্রান্তং মাধবং রাধিকাসখী ॥

[SARGA 4 : *sloka 1*]

THE FOURTH ABODE OF LOVE

On the banks of the Yamuna,
in a cool and secluded place, shadowed by a cane-break,
the agitated and distressed Madhava sits.
There a dear Sakhi of Radha's softly walks up to him.

O Madhava,
parted from you Radha is wasting away,
thin, wan and pale is Radha.
Fearing the attack from the arrows of the five senses,
she has sought refuge in the depth of meditation.
The cool sandalwood, the calm rays of the moon,
they burn and scorch Radha.

This soft southern breeze,
even that is a burning agony,
for this lovely breeze has wandered through
the sandalwood forest,
and touched the sinuous bodies of poisonous serpents,
and their poison seems soaked into the very substance
of the southern wind.

Seeing the state of Radha's heart,
that pitiless god of love, Madana,
lets loose shaft upon shaft from his flower-
bedecked bow.
Srimati dreams only of you, Madhava,
for you are her whole, her heart ;
and therefore it is to save you
from those terrible shafts that she covers her
chest, her breasts, with two dark green lotus leaves.

Srimati has turned her own chest into a shield,
and an armour, to protect you who is her heart.

That soft bed, which is your own,
has become a horrifying bed of death for Radhika,
for, Madhava, you and Srimati are parted,
she is alone.
Yet, because she hopes that you will, one day,
once again, share that empty bed
she, as if a suppliant in a temple, spreads blossoms,
and makes for you once more that holy, flower-strewn
nuptial bed.

The rain-filled clouds have gathered
within her eyes today,
and they rain, her eyes rain tears to wet her burning body.
O Madhava, Rahu seems to advance with open mouth
and ghastly tearing teeth to crush the moon ;
and the moon melts showering nectar today.

Secretly, Srimati draws your image with musk,
and in her madness she sees you as Madana,
and etches the symbol of Makara —
Sagittarius, the sign of Kama, the pitiless god of love.
She arms you with arrows, the arrows of Madana,
made with the honey-swollen blossoms of the mango.
Piercing is the arrow and its sweetness,
and oh she bows to all her make-belief
and prays to her only love.
She prays, she bows, she prostrates herself
calling out :
O Madhava, I throw my all at your feet,
I take shelter in thought of you.
If you should turn away from me
then even the cool rays of the moon
shall burn me up as if by roaring flames.

You are ever diffiult to reach, Madhava,
but today, Srimati has made you her own,
for an image, drawn by a paste of musk,
has become real and the True.

So sometimes Srimati weeps her pain of separation
to that painted symbol,
and sometimes, because she feels your presence,
your closeness, your reality, she laughs,
and sometimes, fearing you are going away, she is
despondent,
and sometimes, feeling you have returned to her arms,
she imagines that meeting, the lovely reunion,
the embrace, and the burden from her heart is lifted.

And, O reader, if you would understand
this bliss,
meditate,
and read over and over again the words
spoken by the Sakhi regarding the distress
of Srimati, and her plight, parted from Sri Hari.

Ah Madhava, her home has become a wilderness for
Srimati,
parted from you.

We, her dear Sakhis, are all encircling nets
holding her,
Kama-deva is the violent tiger waiting to tear
her to shreds ;
Srimati herself is the gentle wild-wood deer,
fearful, timid,
and in this terrible forest-fire of the pain
of parting, she runs, she flees to escape
that attacking, rending, beast — the god of love —
and falls into the trapper's net ;

only the wilderness of her fevered imagination remains,
and we, who are her dear Sakhis,
she forgets.

O Kesava,
separation from you has made
your Radha frail,
her body wastes away, she has no strength,
the jewelled necklace that lies on her breasts
lies heavy, weighted as granite rock.

O Kesava,
separation from you has so affected your Radha
as we put on her the cool sandalwood,
she shrinks away, pales,
as if it were some fearful poison paste.

O Kesava,
parted from you your Radha sighs,
with such hot and heavy breath that it seems Madana's
fire will burn all away.

O Kesava,
parted from you your Radha's eyes seek you,
look for you, yet a broken blossom are her eyes —
lotus torn from their anchorage, their shelter —
her eyes seek you everywhere.

O Kesava,
the tender green upon which she lies
is a burning bed of glowing coals,
parted from you, for Srimati.

O Kesava,
separated from you, Srimati sits resting her wan face
upon her palm : a pale new-born crescent moon
seen in the half-light of the evening sky.

O Kesava,
parted from you Srimati knows
death is certain and, so that in another life
she may have you again,
she meditates, she whispers silent within herself :
Hari, Hari.

They who have offered their all
at the feet of Sri Hari
may this song by the poet Jayadeva increase
their bliss, their joy.

Love's flames burn the body of Radha.
She rises, she falls, she speaks, she weeps,
she calls upon the name,
she faints with the ardour of her love.
Nothing can cure her.
O Kesava, you are her only cure,
you have the salve, the unguents, the ointments,
O anoint her with your presence, her only love.
All our cures have been fruitless, our words unheeded.
O Kesava, you know the depth of this her disease,
you know the cure.
O Kesava, if you do not give her what she needs
you will be more harshly hard
than the adamantine bolt of Indra.

The afflicted Srimati, her body aflame
and burning with love,
seeks cool sandalwood, lotus blossoms, and moonbeams,
but no, they burn.
Everything burns and tortures her,
all she can do is think of you, crave for you
and meditate upon your name.
She waits — O when will you come.
It is this hope alone that lets her live,

or else her life would leave her body —
a wisp of breath burnt by the flames of separation.

This is the Radha who could not bear
to let you leave the shadow of her eyelids.
And today, where are you, Kesava ? —
parted from your Radha who sees every flower,
every blossom, moment by moment, become those
    wounding
mango blossoms. Those shafted arrows of love's pain.
How will she go on bearing this never-ending agony
of separation from her love ?

That long ago day,
when Gokul was flooded by Indra's revengeful
pitiless annihilating rain,
when, to save the Vraja-vasis,
and telling them to seek shelter in the heart
of their secret cave,
Sri Krishna raised his proud arms
on which was poised the mountain Govardhana :
(strong as a mountain is that which augments and increases
    the consciousness of the Lord's presence and grace :
    Transcendental Consciousness)
and, when the grateful gopis rushed to Sri Krishna
to tell their love, to kiss his all-encircling arms,
the kiss of their loving lips merged into the vermilion
stroke that marks the horizon : the spaces of Eternity.

And so may those arms of Sri Krishna,
the slayer of Kamsa, the eternal evil,
rain eternal bliss and prosperity upon you
and all these created worlds.

SAKANGKSA-PUNDARIKAKSA

In this Sarga
the poet has made the Sakhi
become Sri Krishna's messenger
to Radha.

When Sri Krishna hears
how Radha is pining for him
he begs the Sakhi
to go to Radha
and tell her
how much he desires her.

Because of his feeling of guilt
at being involved with other gopis
he finds himself leaden-footed,
he cannot go to her.
So he begs
that the Sakhi go to Radha
and entreat her to come soon
to the secret bower where he waits —
her "ever-desiring Pundarikaksa" :
whose eyes are like the buds
of the white lotus.

The Fifth Sarga

অহমিহ নিবসামি যাহি রাধাং
অনুনয় মদ্বচনেন চানয়েথাঃ ।
ইতি মধুরিপুণা সখী নিযুক্তা
স্বয়মিদমেত্য পুনর্জগাদ রাধাম্ ॥

[SARGA 5 : *sloka* 1]

THE FIFTH ABODE OF LOVE

Dear Sakhi, take my message to Srimati,
entreat her, bring her to me.
I shall stay here waiting.

The Sakhi returned to Radha,
carrying his message.

I have just come, my dear, from your beloved.
Ah, how can I describe to you his plight,
his pain, his suffering.
The joyous play of the south wind
has turned into hungry flames of a fire
that laves his limbs ;
and the perfume of flowers bursting into bloom
has driven him distraught.

My dear, I have seen him.
He lies half fainting in the moonlight.
Wounded by the bow of Madana he lies stricken,
lamenting, and waiting only for you.

The bees rise in waves, murmuring their ceaseless
call of insatiable love ;
and your Sri Hari covers his ears,
he will not listen to their song,
it reminds him : at the end of day comes Night,
but for him there is only darkness,
for there is no Radha.
His pain increases, his mind shudders ;
he lies lamenting.

The poet Jayadeva speaks of Sri Hari's pain
as he burns in the flames of love and separation,
for those who have a wealth of love for God
within their secret hearts.
May a fire rise and flame into a vision
of Sri Hari within,
into God-consciousness within their mind and heart.

Within that secret bower,
where, one day, Sri Hari had met
and fused with you in conscious bliss,
he awaits you there.
He awaits you there in the same manner as a place
of pilgrimage awaits the advent of the pilgrim.
He waits, he waits hoping,
hoping, awaiting the cage of your lovely breasts
that shall press against him and dissolve
into unending bliss : a nectar of love.
That is why he sits meditating,
deep in meditation he waits your arrival,
repeating as a mantra your name.

O my dear,
on the banks of the Yamuna he waits :
seeming the very god of love he awaits you,
the God of your heart.
Desiring you today with a terrible want
he waits.
O beautiful one with lovely limbs,
hurry, hurry, your lover waits.
His whole being is lambent with desire
as he waits to take you in his arms,
to crush you in his arms, to blend
your limbs, your breasts, your heart, within him.
O my dear, make haste.

Gently he is playing his flute,
softly, it calls only your name.

Today he welcomes even an infinitesimal
grain of sand, of dust, upon his hands,
for that grain has touched you and returned to him.

A bird alights upon a branch,
there is a rustle, a noise, a sound.
Ah it is Radha, he says,
he hastens to make a place for you to rest,
for you to be his love.
Distracted he looks around,
he waits only for you.

O my Sakhi and friend,
take off your anklet today,
the agitated sound of bells is a barrier
to the silence when lovers meet.
Wrap yourself in a garment of blue,
and hurry, hurry, to the dark silence of love's bower
where he waits — your Syama.

The garland of flowers
looks like a flock of herons against a dark cloud,
against Syama's dark breast.
O my dear, the merit of an endless succession
of saintly lives gives you today this joy,
this mingling in love's play with your Beloved,
your Sri Hari, your Love, your Syama.
And at that meeting you shall be
an unmoving streak of lightning on the cloud-dark breast
of your lover : Syama.

O Lotus-eyed,
when, in the secret bower, you shall throw off
these covering garments, and remove

all that lie as veils between you and your lover ;
when you shall lay yourself down and uncover,
as men delight at the sight of gleaming gems,
Sri Hari will delight at the sight of your swelling
breasts lying unveiled and released from confining bonds.

O Sakhi,
you know how sensitive Sri Hari is,
and night is about to end,
he is waiting — go, go, hurry, make haste,
pay heed to what I say, listen to my pleading.
Make haste, your Syama waits.

Jayadeva, who ever prays and seeks shelter
at the feet of Sri Hari, sings on, and on,
this song of the sweetness of eternal love.
O wise ones, and friends,
join me in singing praise of him who ever desires
our righteous actions,
that eternally compassionate Sri Hari.

O Sakhi,
I have seen him.
How anxiously he awaits you.
He sighs, over and over again he sighs ;
he rushes out of his secret bower
hoping that you have come, but you are nowhere ;
he returns to his bower to look for you again,
but you are not there either.
He cries out for you,
he prepares a bed for you.
Lonely and forsaken is the resting place ;
wildly he looks around,
he calls, he waits.

O Sakhi,

the sun is at enmity with you,
deep is the darkness, as deep as the depth
of silent darkness within the mind of Govinda.

I entreat you : plaintive as the call
of the wild goose for its mate,
Sri Hari waits.
O do not waste this hour of waiting,
it is a magic hour, for lovers and Love.
Pay heed, O lovely one,
do not throw away this hour, make haste.

O Sakhi,
I can see you, see it all as a vision,
it is as if, after this long search,
you have found each other,
and with loving words greet each other,
meet,
and then, and then locked, not within your arms,
but within your very breath you meet,
you join in all the joys of love,
when nails shall, into flesh itself, bite,
and leave marks of love's play ;
and in that joy your minds and hearts thrill.

I can see it, see it all, as in that darkness
the beauty of your faces
glows in serenity as the beatitude of Love.

O you of the lovely face, come,
go softly, carefully,
through this dark night to meet your lover.
None shall see you in this darkness.
Rest in the shelter of some green-leafed tree
as you go. Do not tire yourself.
Then in that quiet leafed-in bower,

and when he shall feel your touch,
I know, Sakhi, gratitude and overwhelming love
shall flood the heart of your Sri Hari.

He who drinks as the bee the honey
from the lips of Radha ;
and he who is the gem of that crown Vrindavana,
which is the ultimate crown of the three worlds ;
and he who to lighten the burdens of the world
is the living form of Compassion,
may that Devaki Nandana
Sri Krishna
be your saviour and your safeguard
in the hour of your need.

⁂

DHRSTA-VAIKUNTHA

The Sixth Abode
is titled :
Impenitent and Shameless is the Guilty One
who Harbours and Holds.

Even after hearing
about Sri Krishna's plight,
Srimati will not leave her bower.
She will not go.
Her Sakhi, and friends, are distracted.
Their great joy
is the meeting of the Eternal Lovers.
How will the Sakhi now accomplish this ?

She hastens to Sri Krishna
and tells him,
not that Srimati will not come
because her pride and she is hurt, is wounded,
but that Srimati is suffering deeply
frm the agony of separation.
By this ruse she hopes
that Sri Krishna will come
to seek his Srimati.

The Sixth
Sarga

অথ তাং গন্তুমশক্তাং চিরমনুরক্তাং লতাগৃহে দৃষ্ট্বা ।
তচ্চরিতং গোবিন্দে মনসিজমন্দে সখী প্রাহ ॥

[SARGA 6 : *sloka* 1]

THE SIXTH ABODE OF LOVE

But even now, the devoted Srimati,
though weak with desire, could not leave
her creeper-clad green dark shelter
to meet her lover.
Seeing this the Sakhi walked, once again,
to Sri Hari to say :

O Sri Hari, Lord,
Srimati weeping
waits in the creeper-clad green cave,
distraught, wild, bewildered, lost in despair.

Her lips are only for you,
their sweetness is all for you. ५(a)
Wildly she looks around, her eyes
ever seeking you.

Wild with love and desire, and desiring you,
I saw her hasten to her assignation with you.
Yet, hardly had she walked a few paces,
hardly taken a few steps,
when her strength failed.
She fell, she fell to the ground,
weighted by the languorous lassitude
from the clamour of love in her being and breath.

Wearing garlands of the tender shoots
of the lotus plant,
and wearing bracelets made of green and delicate
new-born leaves,
Srimati lives in hope, she waits,

she stays alive longing, in longing hope
for your passion, your play.

She has changed her dress, and her ways now,
she looks at herself, and thinks,
Ah this is Sri Hari.
And then again, she turns to her Sakhi,
and over and over again, she asks :
Why has he not come, I wait.

Sometimes, thinking her Syama has come,
she embraces darkness itself
and wastes her kisses.
Or again she trembles thinking you have come,
and then realises you tarry, you delay.
Shameless she weeps calling for you,
imploring she waits, bedecked for your advent,
your presence on her bed of love.

And may this song composed by the poet
Jayadeva
wake the supreme bliss in the hearts
and minds of the appreciative knowers.

O you heartless lover,
who but feigns love and loves others,
do you not know that it is only for you that Srimati
is distraught, only you she desires, waits for,
meditates upon and is lost in an ocean of love.

O the doe-eyed one forever meditates
upon you ; her Sri Hari is the supporter
of her life, her breath,
he is her very being, he is her all.

Sometimes, she wakes, she calls,

she rises from her bed, she weeps,
she moans, she bewails, she entreats.
O you are her love, Sri Hari, her all.

Thinking you have come, you approach,
hastily she wears all her jewels,
and then, when she sees you have not come,
you do not come, she removes them,
she tears them off, she throws them down,
discarded, unwanted.

By the hurrying rush of some small breeze,
the leaves rustle,
O it seems you come,
and she runs to make you a bed
of leaves and flowers to rest upon.
And sometimes lost, deep in meditation,
she is silent, quiet within the depth of silence,
unmoving, still.

She puts on takes off,
her clothes, her dress, her jewels, her ornaments.
She makes for you a bed of flowers,
she throws it all away.
She makes, she unmakes, she hastens, she waits.
O the night itself is unbearable,
it will not end. How will she pass this night ?
She is in despair, in agony, distressed,
hoping, praying, she waits.

Radhika says :
O pilgrim traveller, why do you loiter and rest
in the shelter of this spreading tree of life,
where that terrible serpent Time waits ?
Do not waste your precious time, make haste.

There, look, that is the mansion of bliss :
that is the silence of your heart, make haste.

And when the pilgrim reached Sri Krishna, Syama,
he kept his counsel — he never spoke of Radha's words —
(he had not come in fear)
and Sri Krishna praised ;
and may that pleasure of Sri Krishna
flood you with bliss,
O reader of my verses and song.

⁂

NAGARA-NARAYANA

The darkness of the night
deepens.
The sky holds the moon of Vrindavana.
Srimati, restless with longing,
waits impatiently for her Syama.
But Syama does not come.
The unguent of musk and sandalwood
with which she had perfumed herself
grows dry and brittle
upon her heated body.
The garland of fresh flowers round her neck
wilts and fades.
The Sakhi has gone to fetch him.
There is a sound,
she thinks they have come,
but no, the Sakhi has returned alone.
Srimati weeps
and draws a verbal picture
of the terrible scene —
her lover with others.
In this sarga, Jayadeva
brings out the anguish of Srimati,
and Sri Krishna's eternal Lila —
the game of Divine Love —
as if the Lord, Narayana,
himself is a "gay youthful gallant"
in the arms of voluptuous and lovely women.

SAHITYA AKADEMI
Library
RABINDRA BHAVAN NEW

The Seventh
Sarga

অত্রান্তরে চ কুলটাকুলবর্ত্মপাত
সঞ্জাতপাতক ইব স্ফুটলাঞ্ছনশ্রীঃ
বৃন্দাবনান্তরমদীপয়দংশুজালৈঃ
দিক্সুন্দরীবদনচন্দনবিন্দুরিন্দুঃ ॥

[SARGA 7 : *sloka* 1]

THE SEVENTH ABODE OF LOVE

The moon rises in the skies of Vrindavana
and lies like a spot of fragrant white
sandalwood on the body of her
who is a bride : Space.

O the moon carries dark stains of shame,
for the moon did not shed a pure clear light
when she, the shameless one, went as the *abhisarika*
to meet him who is her lover, and her loved.

Slowly the moon rises higher in the sky,
the light grows brighter,
but Madhava, where is he ?
He does not come.
Stricken with grief, sorrowing, Srimati weeps, forlorn.

O the time is past,
O time streams past, it is running away —
yet Sri Hari does not come.
My youth, my love, my lovely self plangent with love
is wasted, wasted.
Sri Hari does not come.

My Sakhis have also betrayed me, deserted me.
O who shall I turn to today,
who will be my solace, my consoler, my love ?

Alas, alas,
for him, for whom I left my all
and came seeking, searching, waiting in this fearsome
dark, he has forsaken me ;

heartless, uncaring he has allowed me to be pierced
by the pitiless arrows and pain of love.

O let me die,
Death is best now,
yes, yes, let me die than burn, burn,
burn in this torturing unassuaged flame
of unrequited love.

O this beautiful springtime night
distracts me, wounds me.
And who is she, who is that fortunate one
who lives floating on waves of bliss
on the ocean of joy where they meet :
she and Sri Hari.

Because he was coming, my Love,
I adorned myself,
I wore bracelets of rubies to honour
my love's advent.
But Sri Hari, where is he ?
This pain, this flame of separation from Sri Hari,
it destroys me, and this bracelet of rubies
is a band of thorns.

O this garland of flowers,
this garland that lies upon my breast,
O these heartless heartless flowers,
these tender gentle flowers, pitiless,
turn upon my wounded self and pierce, tear,
wound my helpless self as if they were arrows
of that cruel Madana, the god of love.

For the sake of him, for whom
I entered this fearsome forest of cane and bamboo,
(where the winds blow his call all day)

I left my sense of shame and modesty,
left all my worldly ties and considerations,
all for him — where is that Sri Hari,
O where is he ?
He has banished me from the world of his mind.
And I wait, I wait.

He, who forever takes shelter
in the thought of the tender feet of Sri Hari,
the poet Jayadeva, composes this song,
and may this song conquer the hearts
of those who listen
as does the tender body
of a lovely woman versed in the arts of love.

Has my Sri Hari
gone to meet some other woman today ?
Is he on some secret assignation tonight ?
Or, maybe, some friends, to tease,
have kept him back tonight ?
Or perhaps he has lost his way
on this dark and fearsome forest path ?
Or perhaps he grew tired, weary,
and is resting in the shade of some sheltering tree ?

Oh, but it was he, he,
who told me he would meet me here,
in this secret sheltered cane-brake —
why does he not come ?
Oh, I am weary, weary ;
where is my Sri Hari, tonight ?

The Sakhi returns sad and dejected, alone and speechless.
What can she tell Srimati ?
Aghast, Srimati looks at her Sakhi —
has he then indeed gone to some other ?

O no, she cannot bear to think of the possiblity —
the picture before her rises :
Sri Hari in the arms of other loves.
Weeping she says :

With her hair loose, and falling down undone,
as from her languid arms the flowers slip and scatter —
some woman dressed with the accoutrements of war
has vanquished my Madhava tonight,
and they mingle together in love.

Oh I can see it clearly, clearly,
how the jewelled necklace lying upon her breasts
trembles as she thrills to the glorious
touch of love from my Sri Hari.
So clearly I can see it all, how the tendril curls
fall upon the lovely face of that girl,
and under the kisses of Sri Hari her eyes half close,
as if she were drunk from the fumes of love.
Round her face, and her delicate cheeks,
her earrings glitter and sway and gleam.
And her jewelled belt grows bright
with the sway and movement of her hips —
(bright as the joy of the sea-girt earth
as she turns and mingles with space.)

Having once again found the lost one,
she blushes, and sometimes she laughs
overwhelmed by the joy of having regained
that which she had lost,
and again she turns, and again and again
making inarticulate soft sounds
as she sinks
lost to all hold of the senses
in the bliss of love's play,
she shivers,

all her limbs quiver,
and she sighs deep breaths,
and lost in ecstasy she forgets all, all,
and her half-shut eyes proclaim
her shameless abandonment into the arms of love,
and passion's sway.

I can see her. Yes I see her
weary, weary, with the exhaustion of love,
her body, that lovely desirable body of hers,
damp, after the strenuous battle of love —
I see that Victorious One.
Yes, I see her as she falls into his arms,
onto the breast of Sri Krishna
abandoning her very self to his all.

And may this description
of Sri Hari's Lila of Love
remove from the readers the sins and sorrows
of this burdensome Age.

Taking the story of the night's end,
the moon, friend of Madana, god of love,
is about to set ; and the pain of separation
and bereftment grows less.

Yet this pale moon reminds,
reminds Srimati of her Madhava,
her Madhava who, away from her,
waits, his exquisite face
blanched by the setting moonlight, pale as a lotus ;
and the fire and flame raised by Madana blazes afresh,
and fills her heart with pain.

Her face is flushed,
her lips have gone dry,

and puckered and tender
from a surfeit of kisses.
And now Sri Hari puts musk on her lips
as an ointment,
as an unguent,
and that lovely face,
like the moon, is splotched with dark marks,
a tracery of black that proclaims her shameless shame.

And it is thus
that in the leafed-in wild woods
on the banks of the Yamuna, the game of love
is continued by the ever-victorious Sri Hari,
the flute-playing Murari.

And her rippling hair,
which so beguiles the mind that Madana loiters there,
today Sri Hari dresses and adorns
with the flamboyant blossoms of the amaranth,
and it blares as lightning
against her cloud-dark hair.

The hidden heaven of her breasts
is marked with crescents where the nails
scored passion's blazon in the heraldry of love.
And round her neck Sri Hari flings
a necklace of many gems and there it glitters
just as if, now, the sky was crowded with stars.

Her palms are cool as lotus blooms,
her arms slender and rounded as the stems
of water lilies,
and on that lovely arm that bracelet,
studded with emeralds, lies
as if a drone of bees hovered, seeking.

Sri Hari puts a golden chain,
a belt with bells around her waist,
and there it lies upon her hips ;
and that swelling rounded hip and lower regions
are not limbs and parts of her body,
it is as if the bride of Madana —
the god of love — had spread
a cloth of gold for him to rest.
It sways as golden pennants on the welcoming archway
before the mansion and home of love.

Her feet are delicate and tender as a lotus,
and these feet are made more beautiful
by her pink nails that glimmer as gems.

Sri Hari holding these feet to his breast
overwhelms by his love,
brings out into form colour
and incarnadines the all —
and today her feet take on that colour
and walk as if painted
with the crimson slash of red lac.

O Sakhi, Sakhi,
if that brother of Haladhar,
(Haladhar who ploughs and prepares
the field for the flooding waters of love)
if our Krishna, Sri Hari, is going to remain with others,
why, why, should I sit here,
sad, pensive, grieving, waiting, waiting for him
in this forest of darkness and loneliness.

The poet Jayadeva
ever prays to the tender feet of Murari,
the destroyer of evil, that lived as Madhu :
may those who listen to his song of the qualities of Hari,

have the burden of their sins and sorrows lifted
and taken away even while they live
in this Age of Disbelief, and Kali.

O Sakhi, my friend, my messenger,
if he is deceitful
and does not come to my home, and bower,
why are you sad, why should you feel embarrassed,
distressed ?
I know, I am aware of his way, his many loves,
the many hearts he toys with,
the arms, and the many lovers he loiters with.
I know them all.
But you are not at fault,
why feel you are at fault ?

The time is near, Sakhi,
the time is not far when my mind and heart,
my intellect, my all that says this is I,
will move away, will run, will hasten,
hasten to that secret blissful place
where there is none, nobody else, nothing
but an endless conjugation of Sri Hari, and I.

O Sakhi,
he whose eyes are like the blue lotus
stirred by a light breeze,
she who has met him and loves him,
Sakhi, for her even a green bed of tender grass
remains forever cool.
And Sakhi, his face !
— that face which is like a lovely lotus blossom,
delicately tender and fully open,
when one has seen that face, Sakhi,
who, and what, can send arrows of pain into her ?
Whoever, Sakhi, has heard his word,

has tasted the nectar of his words,
what breeze can distract her ?
Not even the mind-beguiling gentle springtime breeze.

And cool and gracious as the gorgeous pink land-lotus
are his dear hands and his compassionate feet.
Having seen them, Sakhi, who, and what can distract ?
O Sakhi, even the rays of the lovely moon
are meaningless, meaningless, Sakhi,
to one who has seen his hands and feet.
He is like a beautiful cloud, Sakhi,
(promising rich rain to the thirsty earth).
O Sakhi, once you have been in his embrace
never again can the agony of separation
hurt as a newly-awakened ravaging pain.

If once the golden-yellow garbed Sri Hari has loved her,
O Sakhi, not all the taunts and jeers
of her neighbours and friends
can make her sigh.

He who is the ever-new,
the ever fresh, the eternally youthful
(since age and decay cannot near him),
once she has been near, and met,
and loved this ever-youthful,
the most new amongst the ever-new and young and fresh,
why should she ever in desolation weep,
once she has been loved by him ?

Sri Jayadeva sings this song of the meeting
and separation of Sri Hari and Srimati,
and may Sri Hari enter your heart
through each candence of this song,
and beat of each rhythm.

O friend of Madana — you springtime breeze,
have mercy, be pitiful.
Bring me just once my Madhava, let me see him,
then you may kill me by the aching agony
of your sweetness — I will not care.

That Madhava, from wanting whom
the presence of my Sakhis seems to be
like a gathering of my enemies ;
O my soul pants for him.
Ah, it seems that a woman's love is not easily checked
or changed, our devotion is too single-minded.

O springtime breeze, blow, blow,
wound my heart as much as you will,
O arrows of love, pierce, pierce my heart,
I shall not return, I will not go home.

O Yamuna, why should you be merciful,
come, let me throw myself into you,
let me sink into your waves,
let me die within your lovely blue waters
of eternal love.
Let death cool my raging heart, my burning body,
my limbs.

One day at dawn the Sakhis had seen
Sri Hari dressed in the blue garments of Srimati,
and Srimati adorned in the golden garments of Sri Hari,
O how the surrounding circle of Sakhis laughed,
and Sri Hari's eyes fleered towards Srimati's blushing
face,
and may the secret sign from the eyes
of the son of Nanda, Sri Hari,
enrich the life and joys of all that lives
within the circle of the universe.

VILAKSA-LAKSMIPATI

The whole night has gone
waiting for the Beloved.
All night long Srimati has waited and longed,
and the beloved never came.
Now it is dawn.
Srimati's whole body trembles
with the exhaustion of longing,
her heart aches, her eyes fill
with tears of hurt and wounded pride.
And then as the dawn comes, Sri Krishna arrives
at the entrance of her wild-wood bower
and stands there waiting,
yet unable to look at her. Seeing Sri Krishna,
Srimati's angry and wounded pride
swells over and bursts out of her control.
She sees on him all the signs of dalliance,
and she bitterly accuses and upbraids him.
And as she scolds Sri Krishna —
the Vilaksa Laksmipati,
"the bewildered Lord of Laksmi" —
looks and looks at Srimati, bewildered
and unable to understand her anger.
Is he bewildered, or is Vilaksa one
whose eyes see but one, whose vision never changes
since there is but one Srimati,
one heart, the one love :
the meeting and unending love
of Sri Hari and Srimati.

The Eighth Sarga

অথ কথমপি যামিনীং বিনীয়
স্মরশরজর্জরিতামপি সা প্রভাতে ।
অনুনয়বচনং বদন্তমগ্রে
প্রণতমপি প্রিয়মাহ সাভ্যসূয়ম্ ॥

[SARGA ৪ : *sloka* 1]

THE EIGHTH ABODE OF LOVE

Filled with unrelenting pain, somehow,
Srimati lived out that terrible night of waiting,
and at dawn at her door she sees Sri Hari :
guilty, speaking soft conciliate words.
Srimati listens, and melts — but what are those ?
The whole body and face of Sri Hari
proclaims his dalliance with others.
Distraught with jealousy, Srimati speaks harshly.

The languor of assuaged passion
is in your eyes, Hari.
Clear, clear, yes, it is clear
that you have been with others.
Hari, Hari !
Go, go, Madhava, go away, let me not look upon you,
your face, or hear those sweet, soft blandishments
of yours.
You, with your lovely lotus-shaped eyes, go,
go to her who can take away all your dejection,
and give you joy.

Ah Krishna, those lips of yours which are forever red,
are black today.
Black — for all night long you have kissed
her collyrium-painted eyes,
and those lips of yours are black, black,
as your blue-dark limbs.

And all night long your passion play
and her scoring nails have marked you.
Oh yes, it is as if on a block of glowing sapphire,

in golden letters, is written
the victory of that passion.
And on that chest of yours, right over your heart,
is the imprint of her feet.
(Did you hold her feet to your heart, and beg, Hari ?)
Oh, the vermilion mark of her painted feet
stands out on your blue.

It is as if what was mere tender spearheads of grass
has turned into a mighty tree
grown tall with its roots deep in the earth of love —
grown tall into a mighty tree of love.
And on your lips — I can see,
clearly, clearly, the marks, the bite —
Oh I can see it all.
I am filled with —
oh is it remorse, or hate, or anger and wounded love —
but will you, can you still say to me :
You and I are one,
that you and I are not apart,
you are never with others.

Ah Krishna, Krishna,
your body is dark and krishna,
but even more deep dark and krishna, is your mind.
If it were not so, how, how
could you treat this ever faithful
longing love of mine —
and me — how could you treat me so ?

Now I know,
it is no more a mystery.
You move from wood to wood,
everywhere that flute of yours sounds,
ravishing the hearts of those who dare to listen,
and those who hear are doomed.

They are those who once were faithful
to their homes and hearths,
and now, your flute, Krishna, makes them run, run.
O Krishna, you are he who wounds the innocent.
The child Krishna is the same, the beguiler,
the ravisher of hearts — he who plays the flute.
The killer, the murderer — have we not the story
of Putana to prove : you suck poison, Krishna,
you can suck the life blood even out of Evil.

This is the song of the wounded lonely one,
who, deprived of love, speaks her agony and her pain.
Sweeter than nectar, and more difficult than entry
into heaven, is this song
which is sung today by Sri Jayadeva.

The vermilion mark of her feet on your breast
proclaims your deceit and your secret love ;
and if, because of this,
this love of ours, what was eternal, unchanging,
should break, should end, should cease to be,
do not think I am sad, or that I regret,
I am only ashamed of you,
ashamed of your behaviour, your deceit.

The sound of the flute of that Sri Krishna,
the destroyer of the evil Kamsa,
Sri Krishna, whose flute is heard by the doe-eyed
Gopa-vadhu, who then leaves all her binding ties
and holds of the world,
and listens only to the aching sweetness of the sound
of the flute ;
and listening her head swims, her nerves tremble,
and the loops of her hair fall, come undone,
and the blossoms of the mandara that adorned
slip unheeded down . . . .

The sound, the call of Krishna's flute,
brings silence into the clatter of the household's
commerce, and the Gopa-vadhus deep in the honeyed
sweetness of that blissful sound, forget — and listen.
And leaving their home run out.
That sound which circles,
and ensorcells like a hymn, a prayer, a canzone,
a canticle, a mighty upsurge of sound
that sweeps, and sings, and is an unbreakable mantra,
and is the leap of joy in the hearts of the righteous,
and again, proclaims to them
that this destroys the rise of evil
and restores the balance in the scheme of creation —
and the poet Jayadeva prays :
may this circling sound of Sṛi Krishna's flute
bring joy and prosperity to all the created worlds.

⁂

The wounded Srimati
has sent Sri Krishna away,
yet she sits,
alone,
grieving for him, thinking only of him.

While she is in this state,
a Sakhi comes
and points out to her
the folly of her action,
and how she has now made herself subject
to the mockery and laughter
of other Sakhis.

Then the Sakhi says
she will try to bring back Sri Krishna
but warns :
"Do not turn him away again."
The Sakhis go to Sri Krishna
and on hearing that Srimati
is pining for him
the Enchanted Mukunda
hastens back to his Srimati.

The Ninth Sarga

তামথ মন্মথখিন্নাং রতিরসভিন্নাং বিষাদসংপন্নাং ।
অনুচিংতিতহরিচরিতাং কলহান্তরিতামুবাচ রহসি সখী ॥

[SARGA 9 : *sloka* 1]

THE NINTH ABODE OF LOVE

He leaves, bewildered, hurt by Srimati's cruelty,
and she, Srimati, sits alone,
sunk in meditation of him ;
Srimati, deprived of love, and passion's arms,
and yet, deep in silence, ever with him.

Seeing her like this,
a Sakhi comes and softly whispers :
O Srimati, O wounded one,
look, he comes, your Sri Hari.
Do not send him away in petulance, in jealousy,
and all the other angers of your love.
What greater joy is there than this —
he comes, when the mild breeze blows,
your Sri Hari.

Those breasts of yours,
that I shall compare with the luscious
juice-heavy fruit of the palm,
O why waste this youth, and your loveliness,
when Sri Hari waits.

Time and time again,
and times out of number,
I have said to you — Sri Hari, he is beautiful,
ever beautiful, do not forsake him.

Why weep, and cry and grieve ?
Look, the young ones are pointing
and laughing at you.
Oh do not weep.

Rather than this, come,
let us go, there, where Sri Hari is,
lying on a bed of the ever-blossoming lotus.
Such a scene shall be a beatitude for our eyes,
for what can be greater joy than to see Sri Hari.

Why do you grieve and exist in such desolation ;
why, unecessarily, hurt yourself so ?
Listen to me, hear me,
and all your sorrows will be no more.

Listen, my Sakhi, my friend,
Sri Hari will come, he is waiting,
he will speak to you with all the sweetness
of his love.
Why do you fill your heart with sadness
and such pain ?

Sri Jayadeva sings,
sings this song filled to overflowing
with the joy of the name of Sri Hari ;
and may this torrent of joy
be a cool breeze to those who love Sri Hari —
to the listeners of my song.

If a gentle one should grow harsh,
and in masculine clamour turn away love's heart
in the commerce of distraction —
does not turn round to the sound of love,
and stay her lover ;
or grows indifferent and irritable towards
the devoted one ;
and acts contrary to that which brings
well-being, and joy ;
what wonder, then, if this should turn her
soothing sandalpaste —

that scented symbol of devotion —
into the searching agony of serpent venom,
and turn moonbeams into the scorching rays of the sun,
and the lilting joy of love's play into grinding weight,
and agony.

Those feet that so joyfully all gods touch,
pray to, and love ;
the feet upon which the great god Indra's
sapyhire-studded crown seems as bees hovering
over the blossoming blue lotus ;
the feet which are cool, cool, beautiful
as nectar honey-sweet waters of the lovely river
Mandakini, which is cool, cool, as the feet of Govinda,
I praise, sing, pray, at those lovely feet ;
and may those feet remove the burden of sadness
which weighs down this universe.

⁂

MUGDHA-MADHAVA

The Sakhis had begged Srimati
not to turn away
her Sri Krishna again. And gradually her anger
begins to subside.

There is the sound of footsteps
crushing the belittered leaves
lying upon the ground,
there is a light breeze
and the perfume of sandalwood.
She looks up
to see Sri Krishna
standing before her.

Once again
Srimati's whole body
thrills.
She glances sideways
at her Sakhis.
They move away
and Sri Krishna,
"the Enchanted Madhava",
goes down on his knees
to his beloved.

The Tenth Sarga

অত্রান্তরে মসৃণ রোষবশামপার-
নিঃশ্বাসনিস্‌সহমুখীং সুমুখীমুপেত্য।
সব্রীড়মীক্ষিতসখীবদনাং দিনান্তে
সানন্দগদগদপদং হরিরিত্যুবাচ॥

[SARGA 10 : *sloka* 1]

THE TENTH ABODE OF LOVE

Evening approaches, and gradually the wounded
pride and hurt of Srimati fade.
She of the lovely face
grows mild again, her anger spent.
Dejected and longing for her Love
she signs deep and often.
She looks up, and there is her Sri Hari,
and flushed with embarrassment she glances
sideways at her Sakhis as if to say :
Oh leave me.
His throat and voice choked with joy,
Sri Hari begs :

My love,
speak to me if only a few words,
but speak with love, lovingly,
and by the gleam of your white teeth,
as you speak, the darkness that is spread
within my mind will be dispelled.

Honey-sweet is your face, my love,
and your lips filled with a sweetness,
a sweetness that draws and drags like the moon
an ocean of sweetness to your lips,
which I, hungry, longing, look,
and hunger for as the *cakora*
looks and longs for the moon.

O my darling and dulcet charmer,
do not turn your face away in anger and wounded pride.
Needless, unmeaning, and O so unnecessary,

is this mood of yours.
look, I long for you, I burn for you,
my whole mind longs for you.
Give me, my love, your lips,
let me quench this terrible agony of mine
with the honey-sweetness of your lips.

O my love, if you are truly angered,
punish me, hurt me, wound me,
turn on me those fiery eyes of yours ;
let that be your weapon to inflict upon me
my mortal wound.

Or if you will, make me your prisoner,
bind me with those lovely arms of yours,
or strike and strike again with your kisses,
punish me, love,
should by this punishment you be happy.

My love, my love,
you are my all,
you are, as if, that which clothes me,
you are my very life, my breath, my existence.
You are my secret wealth, my jewel, my gem
in a vast ocean that holds all loveliness.

My love, there is in my heart only one idea,
one wish, one thought, there, most gently held,
only one desire my heart and mind holds and clings to —
my love, it is you, held by my encircling love.

O my lovely. delicate slender one,
the blue tint of your eyes has turned red today,
red with your anger,
red as the red lotus,
and should a piercing glance from those red-lotus

eyes of yours strike this krishna-blue
cloud-dark body of mine
and turn my whole self, my colour,
my shade, and shape, and from your lotus-red,
ah, I would say, yes, that anger was just,
and my love's anger has been justified today.

My love, that necklace
that sways upon your lovely swelling breasts,
sings by its glittering self the secret
that is the order of your heart.
And the girdle, my love, that swings and sways,
and murmurs of Madana's endless joys,
let it speak, let it proclaim,
let it shout and issue proclamations :
This is the order of Manmatha,
Madana, the god of love.

The pink blossoms of that flower
known as land-lotus, colours the desire of my heart,
and your lovely feet,
pink-tipped, and painted with red lac,
speak the language of love.
O love, speak, give me the right,
command me to colour your whole being
with the flood tide of my love.

The memory of love, and love's passion,
and Madana's scheming arrows,
is a poison that burns me, enflames me.
My love, my love, *dehi pada pallava mudaram*,
give me your lovely feet to cool my burning breast
and be as a crown to adorn my head.
O my love, think of me.

And with these words of love,

and flattery,
Murari spoke to his Radhika ;
and by the poet Jayadeva who loves his Padmavati
this song is composed.

Are you fearful that I love others,
my fear-filled lovely one ?
Do not fear — your gorgeous breasts
by their loveliness keep me captive.
In Madhava's heart, you are the only one,
you alone live there. There is no room,
no place, no right for any but you.
Except for the god of love,
who has a right to enter my heart
except you, my love, my only one ?
My beloved, my love,
come into my arms,
let me be held in yours.
O love, say to me : *Let us love.*

O my fascinating and lovely one,
if you wish to punish me, do so ;
bind me with your arms,
let your teeth leave their deep imprint upon me,
crush me by the weight of those swelling mounds
of your breasts.

O Candi, goddess who destroys,
have mercy, pity me,
see that that evil wicked raging Madana does not kill,
does not destroy me.
Lovely one, let yours be the victory over him.

O you with a face tender as the moon,
your eyebrows curve and move like two deadly serpents,
and my heart quails with fear.

But, my lovely one, it is you,
only you who knows the secret words,
the *mantra* to dispel my fear —
O give me the honeyed sweetness of your lips.

O delicate one, slender-soft,
do not turn away from me
and by your silence, and unheeding, unspeaking
indifference hurt yourself any more.
Turn towards me, look at me,
let our eyes see into each other,
and take all that old forgotten pain away.
Turn towards me, and turn away your pain
but do not turn away the suppliant
who self-invited stands at your door.

Red as the *vaduka* blossom are your lips, my love,
and you face cool, delicate and fresh as the *madhuka* ;
your eyes are the blue lotus,
and as sesame seeds your nostrils.
White and gleaming as the *kunda* flower are your teeth,
beloved, and your face —
ah beloved, all the five arrows of Madana is your face ;
my love, by this weapon, your face,
Madana conquers all the world for love.

Your glance, my love, intoxicates,
and all your form and face, is moonbeam-tender,
and when you walk, and move, beloved,
you move the hearts of all that is created ;
they long for you.
You are so perfectly formed, beloved,
that all of love, and passion, swirls around you
making of you that perfection :
an adept at love's game.
O my beloved, everything about you draws the eyes,

even your eyebrows are lines drawn to perfection.
Though you walk upon this earth formed,
O formless, you are the home and refuge of all.

When Kamsa's elephant rose to destroy,
and Sri Krishna was about to strike down his trunk,
he recollected Srimati's breasts.
For the moment he longed only for her,
and longing closed his eyes.
Thinking Sri Krishna had lost the battle and his strength,
loud the courtiers of Kamsa shouted ;
but no sooner the shout and jubilation of victory
reached the ears of Sri Hari than he grew alert,
and slew that elephant, and threw that evil away.
Once again the followers of Kamsa shouted,
and may that slayer of Kamsa, Sri Hari,
increase the days of your joys.

* * *

This is an explanation of the verse :
"When Kamsa's elephant rose to destroy . . ."

When the destructive force of evil comes to attack, or when the force of the three gunas — sattva, rajas, tamas — rises powerfully, one must move out of the sphere of these gunas to be able to view the problem correctly, and deal with it. "Nistraigunyo bhava" (*Gita* : 11.45) = Be without the three gunas.

This is "the principle of the second element". If you wish to produce an effect on the first element, ignore that element, do not seek its cause, influence it directly by introducing a second element. Remove darkness by introducing light, or take the mind to a field of happiness in order to relieve it of suffering, or trouble.

"Nistraigunyo bhava" = be without the three gunas, be without activity, be yourself. This is resolute consciousness, the state of absolute Being, which is the ultimate cause of all causes. By being without the three gunas one abandons the whole field of right and wrong and enters the field of the Transcendent, ever firm in the purity of Being.

This is also the ancient wisdom of Adhyatma-Yoga as stated in *Katha Upanishad* : 1. 2. 12 ; and is today called Transcendental Deep Meditation by the present-day followers of this ancient path of *dhyana-yoga*.

"*When Kamsa's elephant*" *etc* :

When the destructive force rose to attack, lord lumpish, trumpeting to destroy, the mind and breath moved into the tranquillity of transcendental deep meditation, and in one vast flashing moment he moved into the singing silence of the Transcendent. He moved out of the world of stress, and while he was in this state of "samadhi", the senses, blatant, loud, moved in their own sphere till the meditator returned, and now doubly strong, struck and destroyed — for, now, he was totally pure, being firm in the purity of Being (see above). "Once again the followers of Kansa shouted". And the pure in heart and mind, and totally at one with Being, was left unmoved by the shout and storm of the defeated senses, bound as they are to their master the three gunas, while the meditator, having moved into the field of the Transcendent, had moved outside the hold, limitations, and overshadowing influence of the three gunas ; even though he was now acting against the forces of evil and the gunas with the use of his own senses (and, therefore, the gunas) the overshadowing influence was no longer of any importance or meaning. because the totally pure at one with Being is unaffected by anything, for that would be a limiting factor. Being is un-limited, or Unlimited.

"*The breasts of Srimati*" :

Is where all thought of joy is ; and "all joy" is that which is both within, and is without us ; when Radha-Madhava are one ; is described as Sat-cit-ananda.

All the pleadings and blandishments
of Sri Hari
have at first had some effect
of Srimati.
She is changing her attitude,
she is at last melting.
He,
whom the created worlds worship,
has fallen
at Srimati's feet.

The Sakhis sigh to Sri Krishna
to now wait for her
in his own green-wood home,
with her nuptial bed
tenderly prepared.

The poet
with the help of the Sakhis
takes Srimati
to her beloved,
and the heart of Govinda
is filled
with leaping joy and Bliss :
ananda.

The Eleventh Sarga

সুচিরমনুনয়েন প্রীণয়িত্বা মৃগাক্ষীং
গতবতি কৃতবেশে কেশবে কুঞ্জশয্যাম্ ।
রচিতরুচিরভূষাং দৃষ্টিমোষে প্রদোষে
স্ফুরতি নিরবসাদাং কাপি রাধাং জগাদ ॥

[SARGA 11 : *sloka* 1]

ELEVENTH ABODE OF LOVE

After many a pleading, Sri Hari
wins over the doe-eyed one ;
she melts, her vexed anger quietens,
and she listens to his pleadings of love.
Then, in the darkness of the thickening night
Sri Hari wanders to his own wild-wood home
and waits —
waits as a lover for his longed-for love.

Srimati is awake and vibrant,
gone is the mood of dejection, desperation,
and, O, the hurts and wounds of unrequited love.
Seeing this, Srimati in this mood,
a Sakhi speaks to Radha :
O my Sakhi, my dear,
look at all the wily, loving blandishments
with which Sri Hari has wooed you,
and melted away all the stiff angers
of your wounded pride ; he waits now for you
in his wild-wood home,
a soft inviting bed waits with him.
O my friend, our enchanted enraptured one,
rise, get up,
he waits for you, his Radhiké.

The weight of your full
and richly heavy berasts
presses a weight of languor upon your feet,
but as you walk slow, tender,
let the bells of your anklets ring small peals,
and jewel encrusted, sing.

O do not walk, but move as a swan.
O enraptured one, recollect your Madhava, follow him.

The nightingales are singing,
entreating, calling to you.
They plead for the young in heart to recollect
their Madhava, for they say :
Madhava, Madhava is the ravisher of hearts
and lovely ones.
Do not be angry, do not be angered again
for, O, the nightingales are the heralds
and minstrels of the god of love.

O you of the tapering rounded luscious thighs,
have you seen the leaves,
they wave to you, they signal :
make haste, your Madhava waits,
do not delay, make haste.

If you will not pay any heed to me,
ask, ask that waterfall of gems
that shimmer on your breasts,
or ask those rounded jars of sweetness
that are your breasts.
They are vibrant and quivering with desire.
Your breasts, with the rise and fall of your breath,
long for the embrace of Madhava.

We know, we know, all of us Sakhis know
you are fuuly armed and dressed
for the battle of love.
O Candi, O goddess of the battlefield of love,
O wise adept, throw away this false modesty,
go, go, be victorious ;
let the bells of the golden girdle around your hips
ring, ring, peal carillons of victory —

your victory and the victory of love.

Let us make our Sakhi's nails beautiful
that they look like the arrows of Madana.
Let her move, let her move gracefully,
let her proceed, let her gracefully with ease move
to that field — to Sri Hari.
Let the clink of bracelets and bangles proclaim,
she comes, she nears,
she enters the field of love,
the lists in the tourney,
let them inform Sri Hari, Srimati comes.

More beautiful than any necklet of gems,
more lovely than the loveliest of lovely ones,
is this song of Sri Krishna
sung by the poet Jayadeva.
O may this song be ever in the throats
of those that sing their hearts to Sri Hari,
to Sri Krishna.

O Sakhi Srimati,
he sees you in his mind,
he hopes for your advent, he waits,
he thinks, he feels, he feels you have come,
you stand before him, but no, it is not you,
you have not come ;
and then, remembering that embrace,
all his body, his whole self thrills,
and beads of moisture appear to accentuate
his restless distress ;
still he thinks and hopes that soon, soon,
you shall come
and fill his whole mind with your joy.
O Sakhi, he leaves his wild-wood home,
he comes to look for you,

but you have not come,
and he grows fain with longing.
Sakhi, in the deep darkness of love's retreat,
Sri Krishna waits for you.

With collyrium used as a liner for her eyes,
and the flowers of the *tamala*
worn in bunches as earrings,
and the blue water-lilies tucked into her hair,
and her breasts scented and perfumed with musk,
and wearing the indigo dress of the skies
when the sly and shameless ones tread through the
darkness
to meet on assignation their lover,
why, even the midnight gloom seems to lave their limbs
and move embracing their lovely form.

Against the screen of the dark night,
and its darkness and gloom,
the golden glow of the *abhisarikas* —
O those shameless passionate loving girls —
glimmers and glows ;
glows and leaves a streak and mark upon that darkness
as gold rubbed and tested on black stone —
their love gleams gold, gold, against the *tamala*-leaf
darkness of suspicion, and doubt.

Then from the glitter thrown by the faceted light
of her jewels, her necklace, her golden girdle,
her bracelets, the gems upon her wrists and arms,
Srimati sees Sri Krishna, waiting,
and she looks down,
overwhelmed with shyness and a feeling of modesty.
Seeing this the Sakhis say :
Ah, Radha, come, enter his wild-wood home ;
come into his secret bower.

Smiling, go stand beside Madhava,
enter into the realms of love, into the regions
of passion's kingdom and reign.
Be joyful, be happy.

O Sakhi,
the bed is of the soft and tender leaves of the *asoka*,
go, go, rest your lovely swelling breasts,
adorned by that glittering necklace,
Be joyous in the realm of love.

O lovely one of the flower-soft body,
rest on that bed,
and you, single-hearted and pure,
lovely in all your bedecked splendour,
be joyous in the realm of love.

The springtime breeze is soft on your body,
soft and yet it thrills,
and all your body quivers and sings from that touch,
be joyous in the realm of love.

O you of the lovely breasts
in that creeper-clad wild-wood home,
where the blossoms blaze,
be joyous in the realm of love.

The bees sing, murmur, hum,
grow mad honey-drunk,
and create a clamour within and without
that blossom-entangled home.
Be joyous in the realm of love,
be happy in the kingdom and rule of Madana.

The nightingales and birds that sing
are pouring their hearts out in song,

O you with the gleaming pearl-white teeth,
listen, listen,
O go, sink into love's joys.

O Murari,
this song that gives so much joy to Padmavati,
composed and sung by the king of poets, Jayadeva,
may this song, by your grace, bring joy
to all who hear, and listen.

Long, long, O Sakhi, has Sri Krishna waited for you,
while holding close in his heart the thought of you.
Do not linger, do not make him wait any longer,
he is weary, worn out with longing,
wounded, hurt, burning in the flame of love.
He thirsts for you, he thirsts for the touch of your lips,
he thirsts for their honeyed sweetness,
the nectar that is his,
that he longs for.
I entreat you, Sakhi, go,
go, put your arms around him, embrace him,
adorn him with your love.

When the glance of your eyes,
your look, has enslaved him,
what harm is there now in him holding
your feet lovely as lotus blooms ?
Where is the need for this modesty,
this shyness, this feeling of shame ?
Come, Sakhi,
come to your lover now.

After listening to her Sakhi's pleading,
Srimati looked fleetingly at her Govinda,
and then,
the bells on her anklets sang out,

sweet and strong, their tintinnabulation,
and she entered that blossom-encrusted,
green-leaves-and-creeper-adorned
abode of love.

When the ocean has seen the moon,
and felt that enormous pull,
the smooth surface breaks up and leaps
in joyous waves.
Sri Radhika saw her Govinda's face
and it was the same, it was the same,
the ocean of calm broke into joyous waves
and the surface was tempestuous with joy.

The desire that was a secret locked in his heart
would know completion today.
And that joy showed on the beautiful face of Govinda —
showed on the face of the Radha-enamoured Sri Hari.

A few torn blossoms
and the faint perfume of flowers cling to his hair,
like a glimmer of moonlight
breaking through blue-dark clouds —
a vague flavour of light.
On his forehead is splayed the white sandal mark,
like a reflected thought of a moonbeam
in the darkness of night.
His whole, his all, is athrob,
and is a quivering vibrance by his terrible
desire for love.
In pearls, and gold and innumerable gems,
in glitter and gleam,
like an ocean that breaks into waves,
and leaps in joys,
Sri Krishna is awake and waits for love.

In this song of Sri Jayadeva has sprung awake
the lovely face and form of Syama :
and all of truth and goodness, and beauty,
and all that is righteous and right,
and all that is order in this world,
lives in that body of Syama.

O my listeners, pay heed, pay heed,
pray, holding that lovely Syama firm in your hearts,
pray to him, pray to that astounding form of Syama.

Dearest of dear to her heart of hearts
is Syama to Srimati, to Radha,
and seeing him even the pupil of her eyes danced,
and grew restless, longing for him.
And her eyes longed for him, longed for him so
that her eyes seemed to lengthen,
grew longer to see him more, grew wider,
then grew tired and weary,
worn with seeing only him with lids that never fall
to hide that sight even for that brief moment,
and that weariness of the eyes showed as tears,
but tears of joy.

Laughing the Sakhis run out
pretending they have something else to do,
and then the doe-eyed one
looked at Sri Hari with eyes of love,
and shame in sheer shame and modesty
hung its head and fled.

And when, that time,
when Sri Hari defeated and destroyed
the fearsome elephant of Kamsa,
the vermilion powder with which the trunk was decorated,
and that horrifiic elephant's blood,

was spattered on Madhava's arms
and it looked as if Laksmi herself had flung
a garland of blood-red flowers upon his arms,
and around Sri Hari.

And so the poet Jayadeva sings,
loud and clear,
O may victory be ever in those arms of Murari,
the arms that uphold righteousness and good.

⁂

SUPRIYA-PITAMBARA

The last sarga, "the Ever-Loving Pitambara".
Uptil now there was the testing of love,
this is the culmination, the completion.
Sri Krishna looks at Srimati's smiling face
and the song is the unceasing,
unending Lila of Love.
The poet Jayadeva leads the readers
to the abode of love.
In each human heart, unceasingly,
is singing the Lila,
the meeting of Radha and Sri Krishna.
It is a question of realisation,
and understanding this mystery.
All persons can take part
in this Rasa-lila,
and their hearts can burst
into the scented blossoms of the kadamba —
a pollen-drenched ball of sweetness.
Even the universe
can be like this kadamba
filled with this sweetness and perfume
if one's heart is full of joy
when Sri Krishna plays the flute,
and the Gopa-vadhus
leave their ties and holds and run out,
run out to that music, that song,
that Gita Govinda
that ever sings in the silence of one's heart.

The Twelfth Sarga

গতবতি সখীবৃন্দেঽমন্দত্রপাভরনির্ভর-
স্মরপরবশাকূতস্ফীতস্মিতস্নপিতাধরাম্ ।
সরসমনসং দৃষ্ট্বা রাধাংমুহুর্নবপল্লব
প্রসবশয়নে নিক্ষিপ্তাক্ষীমুবাচ হরিঃ প্রিয়াম্ ॥

[SARGA 12 : *sloka* 1]

THE TWELFTH ABODE OF LOVE

The Sakhis left Radhika,
smiling softly and faintly blushing,
at the entrance of that bower
where with new and tender green leaves
the bridal bed awaited her.

Seeing her standing there,
and so shyly waiting,
Sri Krishna spoke to his Beloved :

O Radhika,
come, step on this bed of tender leaves,
and by standing on them and their pride of beauty,
shame them,
for, Radhika, your feet are lotus-lovely.

When Narayana himself has declared his devotion,
his dependence on you,
O lovely one, accept, accept him now.

Ah you have travelled far, your feet are tired,
let me hold them in my own tender hands,
and soothe all your weariness away.
Even if it is only for a brief while,
rest those feet of yours on this green-leaf bed of mine,
just as the anklets and the ringing of their bells
rest on your feet,
(as brief, as acutely sweet).

Speak to me, my love,
speak such words to me that I am anointed by them
as a king is anointed by sacred and holy oils,

let me be anointed by the honeyed sweetness of your
words.
And that garment
behind which are imprisoned your lovely breasts
acts as a barrier to love —
let me remove it now.

Those lovely breasts of yours
eagerly wait for the touch of love,
lay them on me
that their touch may cool this flame
that burns within my breast.

O my lovely beloved one, lustrous with passion,
all my mind and soul is yours ;
devoted to you,
all my joy, my life is you,
and without you, without your love,
I burn, I am in agony from the flames of love.
Give me your lips,
let me drink deep their sweetness, their nectar,
and bring me to life.

Beautiful one,
your face is lovely as the moon,
and the nightingales singing in wild abandon
wrench at my heart
and are driving me distractad.
Lovely one, they try to imitate
the terrible sweetness of you.
O take my pain away,
relieve me of this dull weariness
by the singing sound of your jewelled garments
as you throw off these that clothe you.

I was confused and agitated by your anger,

it was needless, my love.
Why were you angry with me, you need not have been ;
but look at me now,
do not keep your eyes closed,
is it in shame and agitation of that mood ?
O forget it now, look at me,
listen to what I say.
Forget all those past words and moods and days.
Look at me, be happy,
let there be no thought of regret in love.

The poet Sri Jayadeva sings and sings on
this song of Madhava's love.
Sri Krishna's breast is filled with the agitation
of terrible passion and love,
and seeing this, may the whole being
of the lovers of Sri Krishna
be filled with joy and happiness.

As they embraced, the terrible passionate
Lila of Sri Krishna began ;
the quiver and thrill of the senses
acts as a hindrance,
a slight impediment to the consummation of love,
just as the eyelids are an impediment
when the eye seeks to look,
and look again and again at the beloved ;
and as the lip seek for kisses,
and more and more of these,
speech is an impediment ;
and at the final victory of passion,
at its final acclamation,
even the deep-felt joy is an impediment ;
and yet all these impediments,
these that act as barriers, and momentary bars,
to the consummation of the ultimate of love

of Sri Krishna,
take one to the regions of unending joy.

Locked in Radha's arms,
those arms that are like the slender rounded
stalks of the lotus,
he loses all strength, he falls a victim
to the victorious love of Radha,
he faints under the pressure of her
full, rounded breasts,
her nails have marked him, gashed him, torn him,
thin streams of blood flow from these wounds of love.
Srimati holds him up by his hair,
but he faints under the throat-strangling
lassitude of love, and the maddening
sweetness of the touch of her lips.
Ah, how glorious is that fainting, sinking down,
that acknowledgment of the victory of passion.

In that mood of victory Radha grows violent,
and aggressive lies on Krishna —
but ah, what lovely woman can be as a man,
where shall she find that violent assertiveness
of passion —
her breasts grow heavy, her arms fall apart
leaden-weighted with the surge of passion,
her body shivers, thrills
and quivers under the onslaught of passion,
heavy-lidded the eyes close and she is lost —
ah, what lovely woman can be as a man ?

And Radha now is half-faint
under the rise of passion,
and her in-held breath swelling out her chest cage
makes more luscious her breasts
that Krishna crushes against his chest in rage of love.

And at dawn Sri Krishna sees his Radha wounded,
her breasts marked, her eyes reddened
and absorbed in the contemplation of love ;
her lips pale, all their colour lost,
lost in the battle of love ;
the gorgeous garland of flowers around her neck
broken, torn and scattered ;
her hair dishevelled, all the coils loose and undone ;
the girdle around her hips lying unhooked and discarded ;
and Radha herself a victim,
wounded by the arrows of Madana.
And yet how strange, how amazing it is to see
that the arrows that have wounded Srimati
have doubly pierced and entered to wound
Sri Krishna to his secret heart.

And then Sri Krishna thought to himself :
Look at my Srimati —
her hair is all dishevelled and undone and tossed back
and her curls in tendril creeper coils lie
upon her cheeks still damp,
her lips bitten through and kissed and crushed by kisses,
her garland of flowers torn,
her girdle no longer adorning her,
her necklace falling twisted and punished
on her bruised and desirable round breasts ;
and even in this state,
her hand covering her wound, her pierced heart,
she looks at me, she looks and ever looks, only at me
with eyes of love, of joy, and of unceasing happiness.

And in that moment and hour of love, the love-weary
Srimati looks at Govinda and sees him thoughtful.
In loving accents she says :
O my love, Yadu Nandana, son of Yadus,
with those dear hands of yours

that are more cooling than sandalwood,
paint these honey-filled jars of Madana — my breasts —
with an unguent of musk.
The black collyriun that I had used as an eye-liner
to outline my eyes and soften that lightning-sharp
glance which as an arrow of Madana could wound you,
has by your kisses been rubbed away,
and now that line that has been marred, that has been
rubbed out, put back by your own hands upon my eyes
and by that black line make my eyes large and luminous,
and glancing-bright once again.

O my love, that these eyes should not
like the unbounded flow of a waterfall
go in a torrent of wandering vision
beyond the bounds of where they should cease to travel,
these eyes are bound down to the discipline of bounds
and bounded by our ears,
and so, my love, adorn these ears of mine with gems
and jewels that they may seem the noose
and snares of Madana.

Like bees these curls come and fall
on this vanquished face of mine that you liken to a lotus,
O, with your own hands dress my hair again
lest the Sakhis tease me ;
wipe my face, my love,
and on my face paint small moons, infant crescent shapes
of scented musk, which being black shows
as the black strokes of shame on the face of the moon.

O my love, who bestows on me the honour of love,
this long flowing hair of mine
which is the very banner and pennant of Madana,
which shames even the peacock's glorious and flamboyant
tail,

this hair, which came undone in our hours of love,
dress my hair with lovely blossoms,
with your own hands, once again.

O my love,
the mad elephant of Madana,
or the trumpeting call of love which are these breasts
of mine, cover these once again
with jewelled garments and lovely clothes.

The poet Sri Jayadeva
who prays to the feet of Sri Hari,
and shelters there,
that Sri Hari who removes the sorrows
and lightens the weight of the sad sins of this dreadful
Age,
the poet pours the nectar of the memory
of those compassionate feet into his poem,
and prays that that sweetness, that nectar
(the memory and remembrance of Sri Hari)
will remain in the hearts of the devoted
as an eternal gem.

24

Paint my breasts with perfume and musk,
and lave me with sandalwood paste,
put around my hips and lower limbs
golden girdles with bells that sing,
twist garlands about my hair,
dress me with blossoms,
put upon my wrists bracelets of gold,
and upon my feet anklets with rows upon rows
of tinkling bells . . .
And most joyfully did Pitambara carry out
these commands of Srimati.

He lies on the coils of the hundred-headed

serpent Time called Sesa,
and the glitter of that glorious throne
shines upon the world with the blaze of a hundred suns
and a hundred gorgeous gems.
Sri Hari creates hundreds of a hundred hundred eyes
that they may reflect that sight :
the lovely Laksmi who holds fast to the feet of Sri Hari —
that he may see her reflected in those eyes.
May that Sri Hari who ever sees her reflected
in those eyes, guard you and protect you.

O you wise ones :
if you are devoted to the arts of song and music,
if you are devoted to the meditation
of the ever-present Universal Soul and Being of Visnu,
if you are devoted to the study of Realisation,
and if you wish to be an adept at the subtle
metaphysics of Universal Love,
(to Cosmic Consciousness and love of God)
then happilly, joyfuly, read, read this composition,
written by him who is devoted to Krishna,
that lord of poets, Sri Jayadeva,
this poem : SRI GITA GOVINDA.

As long as this world shall exist,
this poem by Poet Jayadeva shall also,
its sweetness shall be such
that : Honey. you shall lose your power of sweetness ;
Sugar, you shall seem harsh ;
and Grapes, you too shall lose your rule over sweet,
and Nectar, you shall be as dead ;
and sweet milk shall seem salt,
and Mango, you shall weep.

Even the Lovely Ones shall be as nothing,
compared to this (this poem SRI GITA GOVINDA).

Father, Sri Bhojdeva, Mother, Bamadevi,

and this their son, the poet Jayadeva ;
and this poem SRI GITA GOVINDA
is gifted to his dear friend, Parasara,
and to the singing voices of those others
who are his friends.

JAYATU RADHA-MADHAVA

NOTE ON KRISHNA-LILA AND GOPIS

The *Bhagavat* is the authority on which the Bhakti-cult is based. And devotion to God is symbolised by the passionate yearning of the Gopis for the youthful Eternal Lover, Krishna — Vasudeva.

"Vasudeva is the son of Vasu, One who dwells in the heart of every creature" : "*vasati pratidehi iti vasu*" — MAHABHARATA (Santi Parva).

Gopi signifies the five senses, or the five essential elements of the universe. The Gopis are also the maturing human souls groping, growing, craving.

If the Gopis yearns for Krishna, Krishna cannot but appear as the Lover, for this is his Lila — the creation, the created, and That which creates nothing — and so he is called the Eternal Witness. Creation is the action and interaction of the elements, the dance of the Gopis, the Lila of Krishna.

Gopi — "go" = "eko" — the One, Krishna ; the "pi" of gopi can also be broken and explained ; these semantic symbols are the innumerable threads with which the whole of this philosophy is explained, and eventually it becomes an easily understood language for the "devoted", the Bhakta.

In the *Bhagavat*, Krishna is described as Transcendental and Pure Consciousness to see whom, to attain whom, the Gopis, Gopa-vadhus, throw themselves into his arms. The entire episode of the nocturnal meetings, separation, and union is all a transcendental episode and essentially symbolical.

The forest of Vrindavana is the human heart where the eternal meeting, and love, of the divine and human takes place.

Poetry cannot describe that supreme state of consciousness which can only be a silence — it can only speak of the beginning and the intermediate where there is beauty — "eternal Springtime" – and joy — "Gopis and Radha". The rest is Krishna. But at the slightest feeling of "self-consciousness", or ego, He disappears and again there is the lament, the seeking, and the words of unending, unceasing love.

M. V.

PERFUMES, COCKROACHES, AND ATARWALAS

An Exchange Between Monika Varma & Amalendu Bose

Dear Professor Bose ;

I was told by P. Lal about your article on the WRITERS WORKSHOP writers in *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English* published by the Karnatak University.

It has been a great pleasure to read what you have written about us — and about my writing.

Though I think I accept most of your criticism — particularly "prolegomena to haywain and grass", which, today, I confess, was written rather "tongue in cheek" to see if I could get away with something like this — I must protest against your objection to "perfume of the sun". Today, of course, I would write "scent of the sun" — and somewhere I have written "those who live in the sun carry the scent of light".

If Jibanananda Das can write it, why can't I ? In "Banalata Sen" he wrote "*danar rowdrer gandha*". After all, the imagery is synesthesia isn't it ? And if the structure of English language is not distorted, disrupted and tortured, what is the harm, and the incorrectness of using this imagery ?

If I have a command over the language I also demand the right to do what I will with it.

I feel also that those who have chosen to write in English should be judged as poets — just pure poets. Whether they happen to be Hottentots, or Indians, or English who came over with the Normans, is quite beside the point. And the critics have the right to kill the poems of the poets for their failure in writing — their structure, their banality and other wordy drearinesses.

Sokranala Farm, M. P.
18 August 1968 MONIKA VARMA

⁂

Dear Monika Varma :

It's pleasant to have a letter from you, especially since it's a letter of protest.

Jibanananda is a poet when he writes of "rowdrer gandha". Forgive me if I say (forgive me because I am using strong language), one is no more than a poetaster when one writes of "the perfume of the sun". *Perfume*, dear young lady, *perfume* ? Doesn't the word give you the sensation of a cockroach creeping up your back ? You say you would have now written *scent*. Of course you would. Or, if you slipped into romanticism, you could even use "fragrance", but *perfume* ? doesn't that smack of the "atar-walas" in Burrabazar and Chitpore ?

You talk of command over the English language and the poet's right "to do what I will with it". By all means do what you like with the language ; as a poet (and one whom I have admired and hope to admire more) you can add an edge to the language you use. If you read my inconsequential essay you will notice that that precisely is the thesis that I have pushed into the essay : the Indian writers of English till 1947 dared not command the English language ; they were its slaves ; some writers of today have liberated themselves from the shackles of yesterday and are proving themselves to be poets primarily by their verbal freedom, the freedom that even the wandering Bauls had.

You have, Mrs Varma, that freedom and that incipient command, and that is precisely why I was repelled by the ugly word "perfume", a word that disproves rather than proves your synesthesia.

Calcutta
20 August 1958

AMALENDU BOSE

⁂

Dear Professor Bose :

Thank you for your letter of the 20th August.

I continue my battle for my poor word "perfume".

"Perfume" may be an archaic-ism but if it is used in a context which the writer / poet feels fits into the mood, rhythm, quality, and texture of the poem, can't it be used ?

Take my poem :

Awakened by the perfume of the sun
the sleep-sodden air tears with clutching hand roses . . .

How was it written ?

I woke up in a small narrow room where the windows looked out upon tall green mountains — and another upon a far river bed — this accounts for the falcons where they wheeled and called — it was still cold ; the sun and cold air combined itself into something palpable and yet the morning air held a feeling of sleep — straight in front of me was a vase filled with roses and I could, in that strange early morning silence, hear the petals as they fell one by one, and then with a rush.

It never happened again — it probably never will happen again : "awakened by the perfume of the sun / the sleep-sodden air tears with clutching hand roses / and I am distraught as petals in cadenced whispers / soft in dove-flight fall."

What could I use except "perfume" when I wanted to convey the distilled heart-beat of sunlight — "fragrance" is too weak ; and "scent" too rough — rough in texture — and much too prosaic and pedestrian.

Language as such is thoroughly inadequate in any case — as many writers have felt time and time again.

But to return to the word "perfume".

In my translation of *Gita Govinda* I have again had to use the word to convey "the perfume of your mouth", when Sri Krishna speak to Radha. He does not speak to her when she is far away, or in a letter, but in the violence of passion. "*Scent*" of a woman's mouth ? "*fragrance*" ? "*smell*" ? "*odour*" ? or "the perfume of your mouth, my love" — when the great Lover kisses his Love ?

No, Professor, I regret I cannot accept your condemnation of "perfume" in spite of the cockroaches — and as for "atarwalas" and "atar" have you ever been to Kannauj and smelt the perfume of all the roses that ever grew ?

And finally, we women use perfume — never scent. To use Nancy Mitford's language "scent" is most definitely non-U — and M. Worth and Dior would never never say scent — so please do not condemn the poor atarwalas of Burrabazar.

I do hope you will forgive me all this facetiousness and accept my apologies for any unwitting rudeness.

Calcutta
17 September 1968

MONIKA VARMA

Dear Mrs Varma :

Many thanks for your letter of the 17th.

We have to agree to differ on the suitability of the word "perfume". We agree on the "le mot juste" concept, that there is but one single word-road to the poet's imagination ; we differ in our estimate of the road. You have the advantage of being the poet ; I have the dubious advantage of being the anatomist of the poem.

I hope the gods that be will some day devise an occasion for us to meet when the poet and the pedagogue may continue this argument on the personality of words. For the present, I have to thank you for writing on the gestation of your poem. Some day, who knows, when I succeed in perpetrating a whole essay on your poetry, I may find this letter very useful.

Lal has sent me a copy of your Tagore translations. I had read them admiringly in *One Hundred and One*.

Calcutta
7 October 1968

AMALENDU BOSE

⁂ Professor Amalendu Bose is Head of the Department of English of Calcutta University.

That Fatal Poem

NEW DELHI, *October 25.* — An English translation of the Spanish poem by Mr Octavio Paz, former Mexican Ambassador in New Delhi, which touched off a controversy leading to his withdrawal from the Mexican foreign service, is now available here, says P.T.I.

The poem, wich starts with the words "A small act of homage to Hvitizipontle (God of Sacrifices) and his high priest", as published in *The Times Literary Supplement*, says :

The cleanness, the purity
(perhaps it may be worth
writing it on the cleanness of the page)
is not clean
it is a rage
(yellow and black
cutter of spleen in Spanish)
spread out across the page.
why ?
shame is anger
turned back on oneself
if
a whole nation ashames itself
it is a lion which crouches
ready to spring
(the municipal workman clean up the bloodstains
in the plaza of sacrifice)
look now,
smirched
before anything is said
which might be worth
the cleanness.

SAHITYA AKADEMI
Library
30323
10.3.69

The poem was written in the wake of the student-police clashes in Mexico on the eve of the Olympiad.

While the Mexican Government said that Mr Paz had been dismissed from the service the poet-diplomat asserted that he had resigned.

— *News Report in* HINDUSTAN STANDARD

OCTAVIO PAZ's *New Poems*, published by Dialogue Calcutta, are available from the WORKSHOP.

WRITERS WORKSHOP

WRITERS WORKSHOP *was founded in 1958. It consists of a group of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in Indian literature. Its task is that of defining and substantiating the role by discussion and diffusion of creative writing from India and other countries.*

Discussions are held on Sunday mornings at 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 45, India, and diffusion done through a series of pamphlets and books issued by writers whose work has met with WORKSHOP *approval. A complete, descriptive check-list is available on request.*

The WORKSHOP *is non-profit and non-political ; it consists of writers sympathetic to the ideals and principles embodied in creative writing : it is concerned with practice not theorising, helpful criticism not iconoclasm.*

The WORKSHOP *publishes a bi-monthly journal,* The Miscellany, *devoted to creative writing. It is not a house journal ; as a rule it gives preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers, its two chief criteria for selection being high imaginative awareness and mature technique. Established writers appear in its pages if their work meets those standards.* The Miscellany *does not carry advertising. A token payment is made for contributions.*

One can become a member or an Associate by written application to the Secretary, which requires the support of two members and approval by majority on committee. Members are writers with published work to their credit. To be an Associate requires agreement with the aims and objects of WRITERS WORKSHOP, *active interest in creative writing, and a willingness to lend practical assistance to* WORKSHOP *activities. Subscription to* The Miscellany *automatically confers Associate membership. Further details are available from the Secretary, P. Lal, at the* WORKSHOP *address : 162/92 Lake Gardens, Calcutta 45.*

Creative Writing